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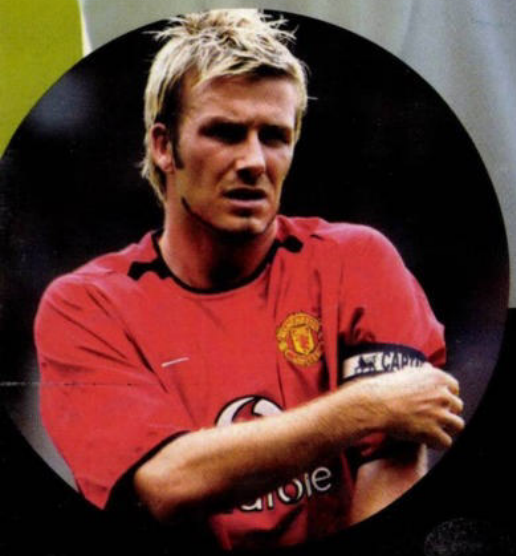
BALLACK
Glory hunting with Bayern

INAMOTO
'No hard feelings, Arsene'

KAKA
Brazil's hottest new star



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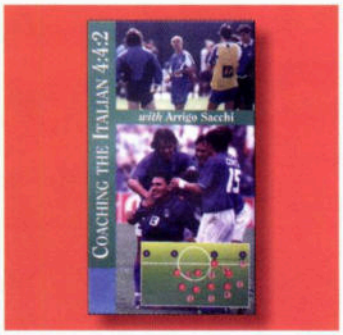

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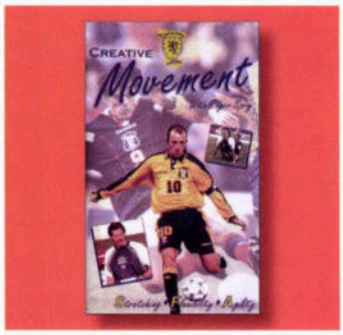

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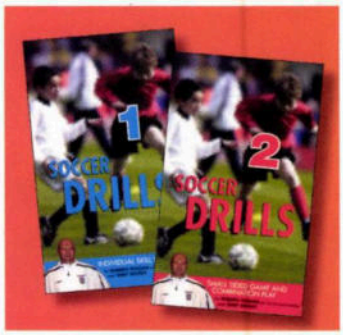

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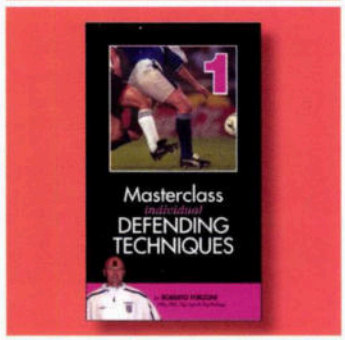

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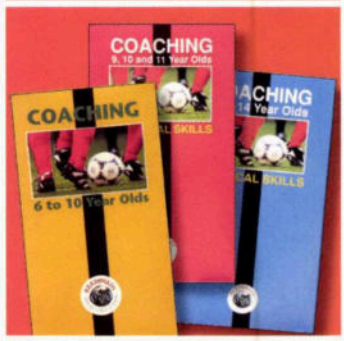

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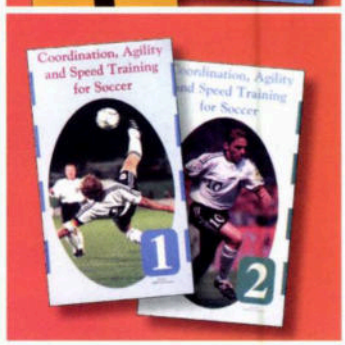

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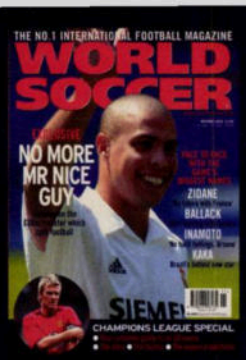

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October 2002

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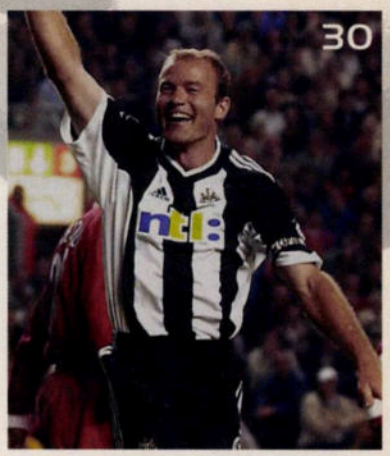

COVER STORY: Ronaldo
The inside story of his £30m move from Inter to Real Madrid
On a high: the view from Spain 52
On a low: the view from Italy 54

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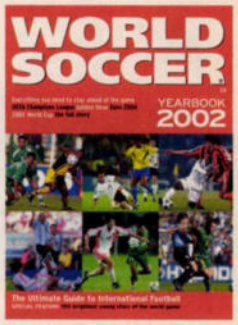
NOTHING illustrates the growing divide between the haves and have-nots of European club football more than the transfer of Ronaldo to Real Madrid. No other club could afford to spend £30million on transfer deadline day, least of all on a Brazilian World Cup-winner with dodgy knees. Yet Madrid don't *need* Ronaldo – there are plenty of other forwards who would be more effective target men for Zidane, Raul and Figo to play off – but needs don't come into it. Madrid bought Ronaldo because, well, they could. They hope his arrival will add to their aura of invincibility, irrespective of what he actually does on the pitch. And in today's game, image is everything.



So Real Madrid are in pursuit of a record 10th Champions Cup, Ronaldo or no Ronaldo. Good luck to them. And good luck, also, to those teams who must do battle with them. Each has been given equal treatment in our team-by-team guide, starting on page 16. The official squad lists, unavailable from UEFA at press time, will be published next month.

Thanks to those of you who have already been in touch to complement us on the appearance of the new *World Soccer Yearbook*. For those of you who have been unable to locate a copy in the shops, it can be ordered from our website, www.worldsoccer.com.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

The month in pictures

● 17/08/02...Leeds beat Manchester City 3-0 on the opening day of the Premiership season

● 19/08/02...Arsenal's bid to sign Fabian Carini from Juventus collapses

● 20/08/02...Andrii Shevchenko is ruled out until October after a knee operation

● 21/08/02...Denmark celebrate Ebbe Sand's goal which brought them a 1-0 friendly win over Scotland in Glasgow

FIRST PERSON Zinedine Zidane

'Football is in crisis – if it were needed, I'd take a pay cut'

Facing the issues...Zinedine Zidane

I HOPE this season will end as happily as the previous one. I had never won the Champions League during all my time with Juventus so to achieve that in my first season with Madrid was wonderful – particularly as this was also their centenary year.

Now we start the new season with new targets. I wanted to win the European Supercup against Feyenoord in Monaco and we did that. The next international targets are to win the World Club Cup in Tokyo in December and, at the same time, to qualify from our group in the first round of the Champions League.

I really believe we can do better this season. Of course, it should be an advantage to have Ronaldo with us! When he is fit, he is the best in the world. I think he must be favourite to win the European Footballer of the Year award and FIFA World Player of the Year. After all, he scored two goals to help his country win the World Cup Final, and when I did the same I also won those awards.

There was some criticism that Madrid were more interested in selling players than buying them, but the Ronaldo deal answered that and also the fact that Madrid were linked with Rivaldo when he left Barcelona and before he went to Milan. Anyway, I find it hard to believe there wasn't a secret agreement with Barcelona that they would release him only on condition that he didn't join Madrid.

I was surprised he left Barcelona because he had a year on his contract, but that's football. In fact, it concerns me that he has gone to Milan because we could be playing them later in the season in the Champions League – they will be a serious threat with Rivaldo as well as Inzaghi, Shevchenko, Rui Costa etc.

More generally, it's clear there is a problem in the game when clubs have 35 or 36 professionals on the books because they cannot all play and earn their money. There are a lot of good players now who cannot find clubs.

The game has changed, and players must recognise that as well as directors. If I felt it were essential, then I would offer to take a pay cut. Football is in crisis and a great deal must change. On the other hand, it would be a healthy sign if people in general and the media talked more about the football on the pitch and less about the money off it.

I have been on both ends of media opinion. But I learned all about how it works when I played in Italy. When France won the World Cup in 1998, the media praised us to the skies and we loved it. When results went badly, as they did in Korea, the criticism was bad. That's the rule. Also, there are more important things in life – your family, your children – than winning or losing a football match.

That World Cup left me with a lot of regrets.The first was for my injury. With hindsight I shouldn't have played against the Koreans in our friendly just before the finals. I was physically fit but I had only been back in full training for a couple of days because I joined the squad late after winning the Champions League. But I was the one who said to Roger Lemerre that I wanted to play against Korea. It was my responsibility.

I never thought we would lose to Senegal, even without me. When I went to sit on the subs' bench before the match everything seemed to be going just right for us. I never thought we would find it impossible to get our act together. Whatever the reason, we were not ready for the big moment and we paid the price. People say it was bad luck that David Trezeguet hit a post but that was nothing. In 1998 people said we had all the good luck going.

'With hindsight, I shouldn't have played in the friendly against Korea before the World Cup'

These things even themselves out over time. When you have the luck you accept it, so it's no good complaining when it goes against you.

Some of my colleagues have quit international football but that never crossed my mind. Christophe Dugarry has retired from the national team and we are not only old friends but the same age, 30. I understand his reasoning. The pressure at every international is like an inferno. It's too much, really. But I still love playing for my country and I want to help us win the European Championship again in Portugal in 2004.

Maybe then, we'll see. But in football terms that is a long way off.

● 22/08/02...Neil Lennon quits the Northern Ireland side after receiving a death threat

● 25/08/02...Schalke and Hertha play out a goalless draw in the Bundesliga

● 25/08/02...Deportivo win the Spanish Supercup after a 4-0 aggregate win over champions Valencia

Talent scout ASIA

Michael Church selects Asian football's brightest prospects

Moves thwarted...Qu Bo

DU WEI

Crowned Asian Youth Player of the Year for 2000 and seen as the long-term replacement for China skipper Fan Zhiyi. Du, who, like Fan, plays at the centre of defence, was drafted in as the veteran's replacement during the World Cup when he was forced out of the team due to injury. Considered one of the brightest prospects in Chinese football.

QU BO

Sprung to prominence in the run-up to the World Youth Championship in Argentina last year and was immediately linked with a move to Boca Juniors after impressing for the Chinese side. While that move fell through, the powerful forward joined Tottenham Hotspur on trial, only for his application for a work permit to be denied by the British Home Office.

CHA DOO-RI

Following in the illustrious footsteps of a Korean hero such as Cha Bum-kun would have been intimidating for most players, but Cha junior has taken the high expectations in his stride. Recently signed a five-year deal with Bayer Leverkusen, where his father won the UEFA Cup in 1988, after making his mark at the World Cup with his power and industry in attack.

LEE CHUN-SOO

With his pace and skill, South Korea's Lee Chun-soo was attracting the attentions of European scouts long before the World Cup finals. Lille and Brescia took the diminutive forward on trial and expressed an interest in signing him while he was still with the Korea University side. Lee eventually turned professional in February with Korean club Ulsan Hyundai and the self-assured forward has attracted further envious glances from several European clubs, including Southampton.

YUKI ABE

Tall and commanding in the centre of midfield, the sight of Yuki Abe draws comparisons to Japanese World Cup star Junichi Inamoto. Like Inamoto, Abe is capable of controlling the game with his physical presence and passing. He was included in one of Philippe Troussier's Japanese training camps earlier in the year. However, injury ended any hopes of a place in the World Cup squad. While the JEF United Ichihara player missed out on Korea/Japan 2002, he played a key role in Japan's progression to the semi-finals of the Toulon Under-21 tournament in June.

EMAD MOHAMMED

First came to prominence during the Asian Youth Championship in Iran in 2000, but it was in Asia's World Cup qualifying tournament that the Iraqi truly made his mark. After impressive performances against Saudi Arabia and Iran, the 20-year-old forward was linked with a move to Milan. Emad Mohammed is west Asia's most exciting prospect of recent times.

ILYAS ZEYTULAEV

The Uzbek was snatched from obscurity by Juventus last year when they signed the 18-year-old midfielder for their *primavera* squad. Zeytulaev has already made his international debut, turning out briefly during Asia's World Cup qualifying tournament last year.

NIRUT SURASIANG

Versatility is the key for Thailand's Surasiang. Playing anywhere along the right side of the team, he has already risen to the top of his nation's game. At the age of 19 he was playing in Thailand's World Cup qualifying team while also holding down a key role in the team that won the South-east Asian Games gold medal.

Europe calling...Lee Chun-soo

Notes & quotes

"Only 32 more points and we're safe from relegation."

Gernot Rohr, the coach of shock French table-toppers Nice, is still watching his back.

"I think the Faroes have achieved all they can."

Ex-Faroe Islands coach, Allan Simonsen, before their 2-2 draw with Scotland in the Euro 2004 qualifiers.

So wrong...Simonsen

"We haven't done anything in the transfer market this summer and now we are the fourth force in the country."

Roma coach Fabio Capello aims a swipe at club president Franco Sensi.

"We are the strongest. Obviously, the coach is feeling fragile."

Sensi retaliates.

The month in pictures

● 27/08/02...Andy Brehme is sacked as coach of Kaiserslautern

● 28/08/02...Newcastle qualify for the Champions League group stages after beating Bosnia's Zeljeznicar

● 29/08/02...Yugoslavia's Sartid beat Bangor of Wales 2-0 in the UEFA Cup

● 29/08/02...Ferencvaros of Hungary lose 2-1 to Cypriots AEL but go through to the UEFA Cup first round 5-2 on aggregate

Q&A Junichi Inamoto

Kevin Palmer talks to Fulham's Japanese World Cup midfielder

● Three months on, how do you reflect on the World Cup?
It was a wonderful experience. The expectation from people outside Japan was that we would not get past the first stage, but we always felt that was possible. The tournament went well on and off the pitch, and now we can say Japan is on the map as a football nation.

● After a tough season at Arsenal, did you surpass your own expectations at the World Cup?
I will never criticise Arsenal because they were kind enough to bring me to England, and it was a great honour to play for such a massive club. It was frustrating I was not playing in the first team last season, but I always felt confident going into the World Cup. Even though I wasn't getting a chance at Arsenal, I improved as a player last season. That helped me to go on and play well for Japan in the World Cup.

● How did you improve last season if you were only playing reserve games?
It was frustrating to be in the second team in front of small crowds, but I was training with the first team every day and you can only learn from players like Vieira, Henry and Bergkamp. So that's how I became a better player, and hopefully I will get the chance to prove it with Fulham.

● Do you hold any grudges against Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger?
Not at all. I'm sure we will see each other at some point over the course of the season, and I would only say thank you to him for giving me the chance to join Arsenal. Of course, I would have been far happier if I was playing regularly last season, but that wasn't the situation. The newspapers said I had decided to leave Arsenal before the World Cup, but the whole thing was decided later. We had a chat after the tournament and agreed it was right for me to leave.

● Did you have any doubts about staying in England?
I am very happy here and love living in London. It is such a massive city and there is so much to do here. At first, last year, it was difficult for me to feel at home because I didn't have too many friends and it was a long way from home. Now I have found plenty of places to go and feel settled. I like Covent Garden and there are a lot of Japanese people and restaurants in London, so I am happy here.

● How have you found the experience at Fulham?
So far it has been very good and I have real motivation to do well this season. My difficulties at Arsenal last season meant I wanted to come back to London and prove I can play well in the Premiership. At the moment I'm at Fulham for one season, but hopefully it will be more than that.

● The press claimed that Arsene Wenger wasn't convinced you had the stamina to succeed in the Premiership. Is that fair?
I don't think Mr Wenger said that, but there was a belief that I needed to be in better physical condition. [Manager] Jean Tigana said this to me when I came to Fulham, and I have proved my desire to succeed by reaching the level needed. Things have started well for me at Fulham, and my three goals in the InterToto Cup Final were very important for the club. Hopefully, it was some reward for the faith they have shown in me.

● What can Fulham achieve this season?
Fulham have qualified for the UEFA Cup for the first time in their history so we want to do well in that competition. I could see the excitement for everyone when we qualified for Europe. I also believe we can finish in the top 10 of the Premiership. That would be progress for the club and then we can look for more next season.

Settled at Fulham...Inamoto

● Do you feel you are representing Japan in English football?
Yoshi Kawaguchi and I are the only Japanese players in England and it is important we do well for our country. That is why it was hard for me at Arsenal last season. People always wanted to know why I wasn't playing. I needed to show what I could do and now I am getting my chance. I'm in the first team at Fulham and I want to stay.

● Does the intense media pressure on you affect your game?
I am used to it now and can understand why people back home are interested in what I am doing. It does bring some pressure, but it's something I enjoy and all positive. Everyone wants me to do well.

● Do you lead a quieter life in England than you could in Japan?
When I go out back home, there are a lot of people who want to talk to me; it isn't so bad here. People still recognise me when I'm in London, but it is easier to go to a restaurant and do what I want here.

● 30/08/02...new Spurs signing Robbie Keane greets the fans

● 30/08/02...Jari Litmanen returns to Ajax

● 30/08/02...Real Madrid start the season with another trophy after beating Feyenoord 3-1 in Monaco in the European Supercup

DIARY

REMEMBER THE NAMES...

AFRICAN soccer has produced two recent internationals with unusual names. Both prove that all is not lost in the search for football's soul.

First, Angola's squad for the Nations Cup match against Nigeria in early September included striker Love, from championship contenders AS Aviacao. The 23-year-old's real name is Arsenio Sebastaio Cabangula, but in Latino tradition he has taken on a footballing nickname, albeit with a difference.

For Mauritius recently, a debutant impressed and promises to be a more regular competitor – even if commentators risk future employment if they use his name too liberally.

What is it? Jean-Reck Ah-Fok.

THE BAILIFFS MOVE IN

Just days after beating Zambia to reach the Final of the Cosafa Castle Cup for the first time, Malawi's football association suffered the embarrassment of having its property seized by bailiffs for the non-payment of debts.

A minibus, car, computer, photocopier and furniture were impounded from the FA's office following its failure to pay a sum of around £20,000 to a local hotel that had accommodated the side at various times over the past two years.

Some of the property was returned after agreement was reached on a repayment schedule for the debt.

In hot water...Ecuadorean ref Moreno

PLAYING UNDER FALSE PRETENCES

The Romanian federation has banned Second Division team Tractorul from playing international matches for one year after they appeared in two friendlies against Egypt's Olympic side masquerading as the Olympic team of Romania.

Tractorul officials denied the allegations, saying the organisers had asked them to play in Romania's colours because the team's normal shirts clashed with Egypt's.

An Egyptian businessman organised the tournament but denies marketing the two matches in Egypt as being between the two countries' Olympic teams. However, they were billed as such on Egyptian television.

The Egyptians were using the games as warm-ups for the start of the African Olympic Games qualifying campaign.

MORENO ADDS FUEL TO THE FIRE

Byron Moreno, the Ecuadorean referee who took charge of the World Cup game between South Korea and Italy, is again at the centre of controversy.

Moreno has been suspended for 20 matches after he signalled six minutes of added time but then allowed 13 minutes at the end of a First Division match between LDU Quito and Barcelona of Guayaquil. LDU, the home side, scored twice – in the 99th and 101st minutes – to secure a 4-3 win.

By pure coincidence, Moreno is a candidate for a place on Quito's city council in October elections.

In the same match, the referee also gave two hotly disputed penalties, sent off two players and caused confusion by first awarding a goal and then disallowing it.

Music to the ears of conspiracy theorists everywhere.

Notes & quotes

"Nesta wanted to go and, anyway, he isn't the player he used to be."

Lazio president Sergio Cragnotti claims he is not perturbed by the sale of star defender Alessandro Nesta to Milan.

"Italians always cheat."

Jean Tigana spells it out after his Fulham side defeat Bologna in the InterToto Cup

Having a go...Tigana

"It was one of those instinctive moments. In the distance, I could see the keeper off his line and so I went for goal and couldn't believe my luck when it worked."

Brazilian forward Pedrinho after scoring from 70 metres for Libertad against Olimpia in a Paraguayan League game.

The month in pictures

● 02/09/02...Lee Bowyer and Jonathan Woodgate of Leeds are called up by England for the first time since their trial

● 02/09/02...the South African FA threatens legal action to force Leeds to release Lucas Radebe

● 03/09/02...Ronaldo is presented to the media as a Real Madrid player

● 04/09/02...Cristian Chivu is voted Holland's Player of the Year

World Soccer
MEDIAWORLD

Maradona and his money

Man of mystery...Maradona

CONTRARY to what many people imagine, Diego Maradona does not live in a luxury mansion nor travel in private jets. The truth is rather harder.

The greatest idol of Argentina spends most of his time in a modest clinic in Cuba. His income is a mystery. The most important source of money for Maradona nowadays appears to be promotional contracts and media interviews. According to Gabriel Buono, one of his advisers, an interview with Maradona can cost between £3,500 and £6,500.

Sources close to Maradona suggest that he is not even paying for the anti-drugs therapy he is receiving in Cuba. Quite the opposite. He receives an allowance to stay on the island. Maradona is not starving but nor is he rolling in money, according to one of his journalist friends who prefers to remain anonymous. It is almost impossible to find anyone in the Argentinian media or public life who dares criticise him. That is no surprise. For a majority of Argentinians Maradona is next to a god, and nothing is permitted to affect that status.

– from O Globo

Clough and the England job

Part of being a genius is accepting you are one. In my experience very few know they are. If you've got a slight bit of intelligence and if you're like Billy Shakespeare or Fred Chopin – geniuses in their own right – it's something you cannot explain. If you're not religious you think: 'Where the hell has it come from?'

The FA were frightened of me. That's why I wasn't appointed England manager [in 1977]. I went down for the interview but then they pulled an old sheepdog out – Ron Greenwood. They thought I was going to take over the FA. And they were right. I hadn't matured enough to play the politics and get the job. I was what I was. I didn't change. I have a habit of saying what's on my mind. I don't think as much as I should.

– Brian Clough in the Observer Magazine

Morientes a pawn in the game

Fernando Morientes deserved better treatment by Real Madrid than he received in the Ronaldo affair. Morientes, in the dressing-room, is considered "one of ours". He has been a key figure in the New Testament of Madrid. He has won three European Cups and all three as a first-teamer. His behaviour and loyalty have been exemplary. His reward was to suffer the calvary of recent events (in the transfer market) which also disrupted the squad in which he has not only work colleagues but friends. [Real president] Florentino Perez has the right to increase the value of the squad but he should take care not to disregard the internal consequences of his policies.

– former Real Madrid midfielder Michel in Marca

Japan after the party

The J.League continues to savour the World Cup carry-over. Since League action resumed following the World Cup, average attendances have increased by 5,684 in Division One and by 1,381 in Division Two.

A survey showed that 66.1 per cent of Japanese citizens watched the Japan v Russia game (the second-biggest Japanese TV rating for a sporting event) and 65.6 per cent watched the Final. Japan's performance may also have helped shift people's interest from World Cup to J.League. Another explanation is that some spectators may be interested in 'merely' visiting the World Cup stadia. To maintain interest, the J.League needs to reduce negative aspects such as time-wasting, players feigning injury and a low standard of refereeing.

– Kumi Kinohara in the Japan Times

France's World Cup scars

France did not make a success of their new start in Tunisia after the World Cup. Jacques Santini will not have learned very much. The scars from the World Cup had not healed. At least Santini can be more confident about bringing in more young players and discarding the veterans. There's a long shadow over the likes of Marcel Desailly and Manu Petit.

– former France manager Michel Hidalgo in Le Foot

Effe bites back

Bayern Munich will finish a long way clear of every other club in the Bundesliga. Michael Ballack, my successor there, will make the difference. He can be a real superstar as long as he learns how to cope with the media frenzy. But he knows the way of the world. I do not regret leaving. I had achieved everything I wanted, whatever people like Beckenbauer, Hoeness and Breitner may have said. The time will come when I will tell them what I think – and I won't go through the back door of some newspaper column. I will tell them to their faces.

– Stefan Effenberg, now with Wolfsburg, interviewed in Kicker

Compiled by Keir Radnedge

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The month in pictures

● 04/09/02...ex-PSV boss Eric Gerets is put in charge of Bundesliga side Kaiserslautern

● 05/09/02...El Hadji Diouf fails to report for international duty with Senegal

● 07/09/02...Norway grab an injury-time equaliser to draw 2-2 with Denmark as the Euro 2004 qualifiers kick off

● 07/09/02...Costinha scores Portugal's equaliser in the 1-1 friendly draw against England at Villa Park

GLOBAL VIEW

Paul Gardner

Look at MLS – you May Learn Something

LONG before the sport of football was born, William Wordsworth had told us that "getting and spending we lay waste our powers". Evidently, nothing changes. All over the world today there are football clubs doing just that. Worse, they've reversed things, and are doing the spending before the getting.

Anticipated television income appears as the villain here, with the English Football League clubs not receiving what they thought was guaranteed, while Italian clubs are not being guaranteed what they think they're worth.

Those critical battles mainly involve the interests of the smaller, less prominent clubs. But not entirely. This time around the financial crisis is showing signs of a worrying contagiousness. The big clubs are not immune, it seems. Fiorentina have gone bust; Lazio are unloading their high-salaried stars. Only Real Madrid and Manchester United seem content with their lot.

Cries of "we can't go on like this" have been heard with increasing urgency. Talk of a salary cap follows, only to be immediately squelched by those who feel certain that any such agreement would quickly be broken by the very people who claim to want it.

The money problems confronting European soccer also exist in the United States. Both the NFL (gridiron) and the NBA (basketball) have salary cap agreements – reached as a result of negotiations between the leagues and the players' unions. A more complicated – and much more innovative – approach to monetary difficulties is the concept known as the single-entity league. This has been thought up, and carefully structured, to give a league firm control of virtually *all* the getting and spending of all of its clubs while carefully avoiding any contravention of the USA's powerful anti-trust Sherman Act.

Major League Soccer operates as a single entity. Thus, MLS is a single business entity in which the investors own a share of the League; some of these investors have operating agreements to manage particular teams, which can be termed affiliates.

The US Supreme Court has ruled that between such a business entity and such affiliates there can be no conspiracy likely to cause any restraint of trade. Which leaves MLS free to control the financial matters of its clubs, to set salary levels and to make sure they are adhered to. At the moment, MLS limits each club to a yearly player-salary budget of £1million. The maximum salary payable is £180,000, the minimum £15,500. There are a few exceptions, when sponsors and/or the League will bolster a special player's salary by up to three times the maximum.

All the players' contracts are negotiated and signed with the League, not with individual clubs. But it is left to each club to balance their books within the £1m figure.

'MLS is free to control the financial matters of its clubs, to set salary levels and to make sure they are adhered to'

Single entity also allows MLS to control the collective sale of television and marketing assets. Such powers make it impossible for the stronger clubs to go out and cut their own deals with TV companies.

At the moment this is a purely academic exercise, as MLS has no strong, money-making clubs. But its ability to ensure that the proceeds of any lucrative national TV contract (that's academic, too, as MLS doesn't have one) could be equitably distributed among all its clubs should interest the small Italian clubs whose dissatisfaction with the current TV deal held up the start of their season.

Of course, this sharing and distributing and equalising is all very un-American, and certainly not a shining example of capitalist virtues. When MLS got under way in 1996, it took a lot of stick for being 'socialised soccer'. The criticism, if that's what it is, is not unwarranted. But American pro sports have, for many decades, struggled with the contradiction posed by rich and powerful club owners who are supposed to be partners and competitors at the same time. Single entity goes some way towards solving the problem, because it eliminates the cut-throat bidding among clubs for players, and the spiralling wages.

Single entity has been challenged in the courts and so far has won all the way up to the Supreme Court, where an appeal against those pro-MLS decisions has been lodged by the MLS Players' Association. But it is far from certain the Court will even agree to hear the appeal.

MLS enjoys the advantage over the other American pro sports that it was born as a single-entity league. Any attempt by the NFL or the NBA to switch their structure to single entity is unlikely to have the legal success that MLS has enjoyed.

Parity is a big word in American sports. It denotes the attempt to ensure that no one club dominates a league for very long. An anti-dynasty measure. On the whole it works pretty well. Basketball and football rely on the traditional American ways of ensuring parity. The classic method is the draft system, in which the top youngsters coming into the league each year cannot simply be snatched by the richest clubs. First choice – meaning negotiating rights – for the top player goes to the club with the previous season's worst record. But the salary caps also severely limit intra-league financial battles.

Single entity has the same aims, but with a much more structured and centralised approach. Without that, MLS would have had huge problems finding any investors at all. But the success of single entity as a way of ensuring financial stability is unclear in MLS, where the problem is not so much uncontrolled expenditure as inadequate income. The spending can be controlled. The getting is another story.

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ITALIAN SPORT DESIGN

Another one in the bag...Real Madrid celebrate winning the European Supercup

Money talks

Gavin Hamilton reports from Monaco on UEFA's proposed changes to next season's Champions League

WELCOME, once again, to football's richest gravy train – the UEFA Champions League – where Europe's leading clubs can afford to forget about the plight of their poorer relations in domestic league football.

Just by qualifying for the first group stage of this season's tournament, each club will receive £2.6million. That's before win bonuses and TV pool money is added.

Last season the 32 teams shared a total of £340m between them. For winning last season's Final in Glasgow, Real Madrid earned £24m – not much less than they spent on acquiring Ronaldo. Runners-up Bayer Leverkusen received £22m.

The consequences of failing to qualify are almost unspeakable, as clubs across the continent, from Chelsea and Lazio down to FC Tirol, have discovered.

Yet all is not well in the land of milk and honey. As European football's powerbrokers gathered in Monaco for the Champions League draw, UEFA gala and Supercup, the talk was of downsizing and recession.

From next season, 2003-04, the Champions League will revert to having just one group phase, not two. The sixteen remaining teams will then enter a straight knockout competition, with a round of 16, followed by quarter-finals and semis, all played on a home-and-away basis. The maximum number of games played by teams reaching the Final, assuming they do not go through the qualifying rounds, will thus be reduced from 17 to 13.

UEFA acted swiftly – too swiftly, say the G-14 clubs – in announcing the changes in July. But UEFA president Lennart Johansson insisted his organisation made the right decision. "We have done our homework," he said. "There was a real indication that the second group phase was less interesting for the general public."

Johansson also used the issue of player fatigue to back up his argument. "So many players at the World Cup were not fit," he said. "They play too many games, and the coaches have been calling for some reduction in the number of matches."

'As European football's powerbrokers gathered in Monaco, the talk was of downsizing and recession'

Ultimately, though, the pressure for change has come from the TV companies. As UEFA chief executive Gerd Aigner acknowledged: "Television is not buying every game these days. We are all aware that there will be less money in the future.

"We don't know if we will lose money by reducing the size of the competition. We hope not, we hope that it will gain in value in the future."

Johansson insisted that UEFA will not tinker with the format from year to year. "We must create the format that we think will stay," he said.

Johansson and Aigner were speaking before the annual Supercup match. Real Madrid added another trophy to the Bernabeu collection, beating UEFA Cup winners Feyenoord 3-1, with Roberto

Changes...Aigner and Johansson (right)

Carlos in imperious form, creating his side's opener, a Patrick Pauwe own goal, and scoring the second, before Guti added a third.

Madrid had also virtually swept the board the previous night at the UEFA gala dinner. Roberto Carlos, Raul and Vicente Del Bosque collected awards as, respectively, the best defender, forward and coach of last season's competition. Zinedine Zidane collected the Most Valuable Player award for his majestic goal in the Final against Bayer Leverkusen.

However, Oliver Kahn (goalkeeper), Michael Ballack (midfielder) and Mario Jardel, receiving his ESM Golden Shoe award, prevented a complete whitewash by the Spanish club.

Discussions between Madrid and officials from Internazionale over the sale of Ronaldo continued in the early hours at the Monte Carlo Grand hotel, apparently without success.

Then, 24 hours later, the announcement was made that the deal had been sealed. In the Champions League, money still talks.

Nothing to fear

The biggest clubs may benefit from a streamlining of the Champions League, says Oliver Butler

THE G-14 group of elite clubs may have been forced, grudgingly, to back down and accept UEFA's decision to eliminate the second group stage of the Champions League from 2003. But a separate, more important, battle with UEFA – over how games are sold to Europe's TV stations – had already been won.

Europe's top clubs have become used to the big money that Champions League participation brings. Naturally, the bigger clubs fear that a 24 per cent reduction in the number of games from next season will lead to a similar reduction in the levels of revenue.

However, a new way in which Champions League media rights will be sold could provide them with even greater income.

Until now, Champions League rights (live action and highlights) have effectively been sold by UEFA to one free-to-air broadcaster. In many cases that broadcaster then sold rights to the Tuesday matches on to a pay-TV operator.

This system has generated record amounts of money for UEFA and the clubs. But earlier this year, the European Commission ruled that it did not allow other broadcasters a look in, and decreed that the rights be broken down into smaller packages.

As a result, broadcasters will now be competing to buy up to 14 different packages of rights (or 'windows') to the competition. These windows range from live rights to highlights, and include such new rights as mobile telephony and internet, which were previously unavailable.

While UEFA has managed to keep control of the most important rights, namely the live rights to the biggest games, it is the peripheral rights, such as delayed rights, that could prove just as important, if not more so, for the clubs.

Jean-Paul De la Fuente of Deureka, the media rights advisor to G-14, was the architect of the windows format supported by the EC. He says that while the main live rights might decrease in value, TEAM, UEFA's marketing company, should be able to make up for any loss through the sale of new media rights windows.

Delayed rights and new media rights are probably the biggest bones of contention between UEFA and the big clubs. The likes of Manchester United and Real Madrid could earn much more money from their websites and club channels if they were allowed to show their recent European triumphs on a pay-per-view basis.

De la Fuente identifies the ability of the clubs to exploit some of these rights from 2003 onwards as the major breakthrough of the new system.

"Now all the clubs will be able to sell new services, and for some this could represent five or 10 per cent additional revenue over what they could normally expect from the Champions League, with more opportunities to come," he says.

There remain an awful lot of details to be thrashed out, but the larger clubs, represented by G-14, are already licking their lips at the prospect of getting their hands on these new rights.

As for the other clubs, which could make up over half of the next Champions League, De la Fuente wonders whether they are truly in a position to take advantage. "All clubs can potentially benefit from the new rights," he says. "But many are not fully informed as to how to put the new services into practice."

With the new Champions League model seen as a blueprint for the future selling of media deals for the major European leagues, these clubs will have to act fast if they are to prevent the earnings gap between themselves and the larger clubs becoming even wider.

Clincher...Guti heads Madrid's third goal in the Supercup victory over Feyenoord

Club and country

Keir Radnedge on the new challenge facing Michael Ballack

MICHAEL BALLACK has started the new term as he means to go on. Bayern Munich's new signing led their cruise into the Champions League group phase then scored the first goal against Lithuania in Germany's opening salvo in the Euro 2004 qualifiers.

What a difference a year has made. This time 12 months ago, Ballack took most of the flak after Germany's 5-1 massacre by England in Munich's Olympic stadium in the World Cup qualifiers. Now, Ballack is back in the Olympic stadium every other week, following his transfer to Bayern from Bayer Leverkusen, lauded as the new footballing hero of the German nation. To prove the point, he secured the German Footballer of the Year prize, finishing a long way clear of new club-mate Oliver Kahn, the winner for the previous two years.

Remarkably, Ballack cost Bayern just £4million, and club president Franz Beckenbauer recognises the deal is a bargain. He says: "Ballack is one of the very best players in the world, and you cannot normally expect to find such a player at such a price. For me, he is on a par with the likes of Zinedine Zidane. Bayern did not win anything last season, but, with Ballack on board, I am certain that will change."

Beckenbauer's fellow directors share his view. General manager Uli Hoeness says: "We needed a man in the engine-room who can also score goals. That's Ballack. He scored 17 times last season – more than our entire midfield put together. Fink can't do it. Jeremies can't do it. Effenberg couldn't do it, either. But Ballack can – and does."

Ballack first earned the united admiration of the German football community in general and Beckenbauer in particular last season for the way he bounced back with both Leverkusen and the national team. His fiercest critics said he had been given more than enough chances with Germany and would never make the grade. Even Ballack himself may have feared the same. He had been brought into the national team in 1999, while with Kaiserslautern, and was a member of the Germany side that crashed out of the Euro 2000 finals in the first round.

More recently, he has acknowledged the England debacle was the lowest point of his career. But that also meant there was only one way Ballack could go – up. Germany finished runners-up to England in the World Cup qualifiers and had to play off against Ukraine. To their own surprise, the Germans won surprisingly easily, with Ballack scoring three in their 5-2 aggregate success.

Having turned the public around, Ballack then proved his worth at club level – guiding Leverkusen to a runners-up treble in German League, German Cup and Champions League.

The European Final, against Real Madrid in Glasgow, was his last game for Leverkusen. Already he had agreed to join Bayern at the season's end. First, however, there was the little matter of the World Cup. Germany went with no expectations and surprised themselves as much as the rest of the world by finishing runners-up to Brazil.

Ballack played a crucial role that earned him a place in the Team of the Tournament, selected by the coaching experts from FIFA's technical study commission. He scored once and helped create two more in the opening 8-0 win over Saudi Arabia, then worked himself into the ground in the subsequent 1-1 draw with the Irish Republic and 2-0 win over Cameroon. Germany then depended on further Ballack goals for 1-0 wins over the United States in the quarter-finals and South Korea in the semis.

Controversy caught up again with Ballack against the Koreans, however. He collected a second yellow card for a 'professional' foul on Lee Chun-soo and was thus suspended from the Final. Germany's hopes against a rampant Brazil would have been slight in any case; without Ballack's verve and vision they proved non-existent.

"I cannot complain about the referee's decision," says Ballack. "I was bitter at missing the Final, of course, but as a professional footballer you learn that such upsets are part of the game and you learn to accept them. Anyway, the World Cup is history now. What matters most is winning the German League and the Champions League with Bayern Munich. We have the ability and we have the players."

Bayern have already proved the point. In pre-season they defeated Real Madrid 2-1 in front of the European champions' own fans. Ballack led the way by scoring Bayern's first goal from the penalty spot – just as he intends to lead the way over the course of the coming season, for club and country, both at home and abroad.

THE SCHEDULE

1ST GROUP PHASE

GROUP A

Arsenal (Eng)
Borussia Dortmund (Ger)
Auxerre (Fra)
PSV Eindhoven (Hol)

Tue, September 17
Arsenal v Borussia Dortmund
Auxerre v PSV

Wed, September 25
Borussia Dortmund v Auxerre
PSV v Arsenal

Wed, October 2
Auxerre v Arsenal
PSV v Borussia Dortmund

Tue, October 22
Arsenal v Auxerre
Borussia Dortmund v PSV

Wed, October 30
Borussia Dortmund v Arsenal
PSV v Auxerre

Tue, November 12
Arsenal v PSV
Auxerre v Borussia Dortmund

GROUP B

Valencia (Spa)
Liverpool (Eng)
Basle (Swi)
Moscow Spartak (Rus)

Tue, September 17
Basle v Moscow Spartak
Valencia v Liverpool

Wed, September 25
Liverpool v Basle
Moscow Spartak v Valencia

Wed, October 2
Liverpool v Moscow Spartak
Valencia v Basle

Tue, October 22
Basle v Valencia
Moscow Spartak v Liverpool

Wed, October 30
Liverpool v Valencia
Moscow Spartak v Basle

Tue, November 12
Basle v Liverpool
Valencia v Moscow Spartak

GROUP C

Real Madrid (Spa)
Roma (Ita)
Genk (Blg)
AEK Athens (Gre)

Tue, September 17
Genk v AEK Athens
Roma v Real Madrid

Wed, September 25
AEK Athens v Roma
Real Madrid v Genk

Wed, October 2
AEK Athens v Real Madrid
Genk v Roma

Tue, October 22
Real Madrid v AEK Athens
Roma v Genk

Wed, October 30
AEK Athens v Genk
Real Madrid v Roma

Tue, November 12
Genk v Real Madrid
Roma v AEK Athens

GROUP D

Internazionale (Ita)
Lyon (Fra)
Ajax (Hol)
Rosenborg (Nor)

Tue, September 17
Ajax v Lyon
Rosenborg v Internazionale

Wed, September 25
Internazionale v Ajax
Lyon v Rosenborg

Wed, October 2
Internazionale v Lyon
Rosenborg v Ajax

Tue, October 22
Ajax v Rosenborg
Lyon v Internazionale

Wed, October 30
Internazionale v Rosenborg
Lyon v Ajax

Tue, November 12
Ajax v Internazionale
Rosenborg v Lyon

2ND GROUP PHASE

Draw: November 15
Matchday 1: November 26/27
Matchday 2: December 10/11
Matchday 3: February 18/19
Matchday 4: February 25/26
Matchday 5: March 11/12
Matchday 6: March 18/19

QUARTER-FINALS

Draw: March 21
1st legs: April 8/9
2nd legs: April 22/23

SEMI-FINALS

Draw: March 21
1st legs: May 6/7
2nd legs: May 13/14

FINAL

May 28
Old Trafford, Manchester

GROUP E

Juventus (Ita)
Newcastle United (Eng)
Feyenoord (Hol)
Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr)

Wed, September 18
Feyenoord v Juventus
Kyiv Dynamo v Newcastle United

Tue, September 24
Juventus v Kyiv Dynamo
Newcastle United v Feyenoord

Tue, October 1
Feyenoord v Kyiv Dynamo
Juventus v Newcastle United

Wed, October 23
Kyiv Dynamo v Feyenoord
Newcastle United v Juventus

Tue, October 29
Juventus v Feyenoord
Newcastle United v Kyiv Dynamo

Wed, November 13
Feyenoord v Newcastle United
Kyiv Dynamo v Juventus

GROUP F

Manchester United (Eng)
Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)
Olympiakos (Gre)
Maccabi Haifa (Isr)

Wed, September 18
Manchester Utd v Maccabi Haifa
Olympiakos v Leverkusen

Tue, September 24
Leverkusen v Manchester Utd
Maccabi Haifa v Olympiakos

Tue, October 1
Maccabi Haifa v Leverkusen
Manchester Utd v Olympiakos

Wed, October 23
Leverkusen v Maccabi Haifa
Olympiakos v Manchester Utd

Tue, October 29
Leverkusen v Olympiakos
Maccabi Haifa v Manchester Utd

Wed, November 13
Manchester Utd v Leverkusen
Olympiakos v Maccabi Haifa

GROUP G

Bayern Munich (Ger)
Deportivo La Coruna (Spa)
Milan (Ita)
Lens (Fra)

Wed, September 18
Bayern Munich v Deportivo
Milan v Lens

Tue, September 24
Deportivo v Milan
Lens v Bayern Munich

Tue, October 1
Bayern Munich v Milan
Deportivo v Lens

Wed, October 23
Lens v Deportivo
Milan v Bayern Munich

Tue, October 29
Deportivo v Bayern Munich
Lens v Milan

Wed, November 13
Bayern Munich v Lens
Milan v Deportivo

GROUP H

Barcelona (Spa)
Club Brugge (Blg)
Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus)
Galatasaray (Tur)

Wed, September 18
Barcelona v Club Brugge
Lok. Moscow v Galatasaray

Tue, September 24
Club Brugge v Lok. Moscow
Galatasaray v Barcelona

Tue, October 1
Galatasaray v Club Brugge
Lok. Moscow v Barcelona

Wed, October 23
Barcelona v Lok. Moscow
Club Brugge v Galatasaray

Tue, October 29
Club Brugge v Barcelona
Galatasaray v Lok. Moscow

Wed, November 13
Barcelona v Galatasaray
Lok. Moscow v Club Brugge

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AJAX

No fear

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STADIUM: Nikos Goumas (23,000)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: None
LAST SEASON: 2nd, Greek League
WEBSITE: www.aekfc.gr

HOW THEY LINE UP

Bayevic uses a 4-4-2 system, with Tsartas and Nikolaidis doing the damage up front and being supported by Lakis, Kapsis and Konstantinidis. Ivic is a quick substitute, while Georgatos, Kreek, Centeno, Prieto and Borbokis will also see a lot of playing time.

AEK qualified for the group stage of the Champions League for the first time in eight years after eliminating APOEL Nicosia (3-2 away and 1-0 at home) in the third qualifying round.

Coach Dusan Bayevic is back at the helm of the squad, and some key acquisitions in the summer have made AEK favourites to end Olympiakos' domination in the Greek League after six straight titles.

Last season AEK finished with 58 points, the same as Olympiakos, but lost the League title based on results between them during the year.

The defence was strengthened with the arrival of PAOK Salonika's Vasilis Borbokis, Dutchman Michel Kreek and Costa Rican World Cup campaigner Mauricio Wright. However, AEK lost Paraguayan national team stopper Carlos Gamarra to Internazionale.

In midfield Grigoris Georgatos arrived from Inter, and he was joined by Costa Rica's Walter Centeno and Argentinian Armando Prieto. The forwards remains the same, with Demis Nikolaidis, Vasilis Tsartas and Ilija Ivic. Good form in pre-season has been carried through into the new League campaign, with a win and a draw in their opening two games. But the Champions League presents a formidable challenge.

"You cannot choose your opponents," says Bayevic, after his team had been pitted with Real Madrid, Roma and Genk. "But we should not be stressed. There will be more pressure on them."

AEK are the only Greek team to have beaten Real Madrid in European competition, in 1985. There will never be a better time to repeat the feat.

Lou Economopoulos

On the ball...AEK will bank on Demis Nikolaidis' goalscoring touch

First-choice...Tunisian Hatem Trabelsi (left) plays at right-back

Ronald's Double top

Koeman makes his mark in Amsterdam

COACH: Ronald Koeman
STADIUM: Amsterdam ArenA (51,342)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Champions League/Champions Cup (1971, 1972, 1973, 1995); Cup-winners Cup (1987); UEFA Cup (1992); Supercup (1972, 1973, 1995)
LAST SEASON: 1st, Dutch League
WEBSITE: www.ajax.nl

HOW THEY LINE UP

Koeman has remained true to Ajax traditions by playing 4-3-3 with wingers (Van der Meyde and Sikora), but has not been afraid to revert to a defensive format with extra midfielders at the expense of the wide men. In place of the injured Van der Vaart, Litmanen is likely to play behind main striker Hossam, with Ibrahimovic and Machlas as options.

UNDER the guidance of former Holland stalwart Ronald Koeman, Ajax are back in the Champions League for the first time in three seasons, having won the Dutch League and Cup double last year.

Koeman, a European Cup winner with PSV in 1988 and Barcelona four years later, has restored elements to the club's football that many felt were lacking under previous regimes.

"When Rudi Krol and I took over, Ajax were being criticised all the time by the fans and the media for their style," said Koeman. "We put a smile back on the fans' faces by getting the players to enjoy their football. But behind the scenes the work is hard. There is a lot of competition for places. Anyone who doesn't like the way we do things is shipped out."

Players deemed surplus to requirements this summer included Pius Ikedia (loaned to Groningen) and Richard Knopper (PAOK Salonika). The remaining squad members form a blend of youth and experience. The likes of Richard Witschge and Aron Winter provide the experience, while Rafael Van der Vaart and Andy Van der Meyde are the latest to come through the ranks. Romanian Cristian Chivu, voted Dutch Footballer of the Year, is still only 21, but is already well established as club captain. Victor Sikora, a summer signing from Vitesse, is another highly rated international in the Overmars mould.

Van der Vaart's recent knee injury will deprive Ajax of their most creative player for most of October, but the return of Jari Litmanen after three frustrating seasons at Barcelona and Liverpool could compensate.

John Holmesdale

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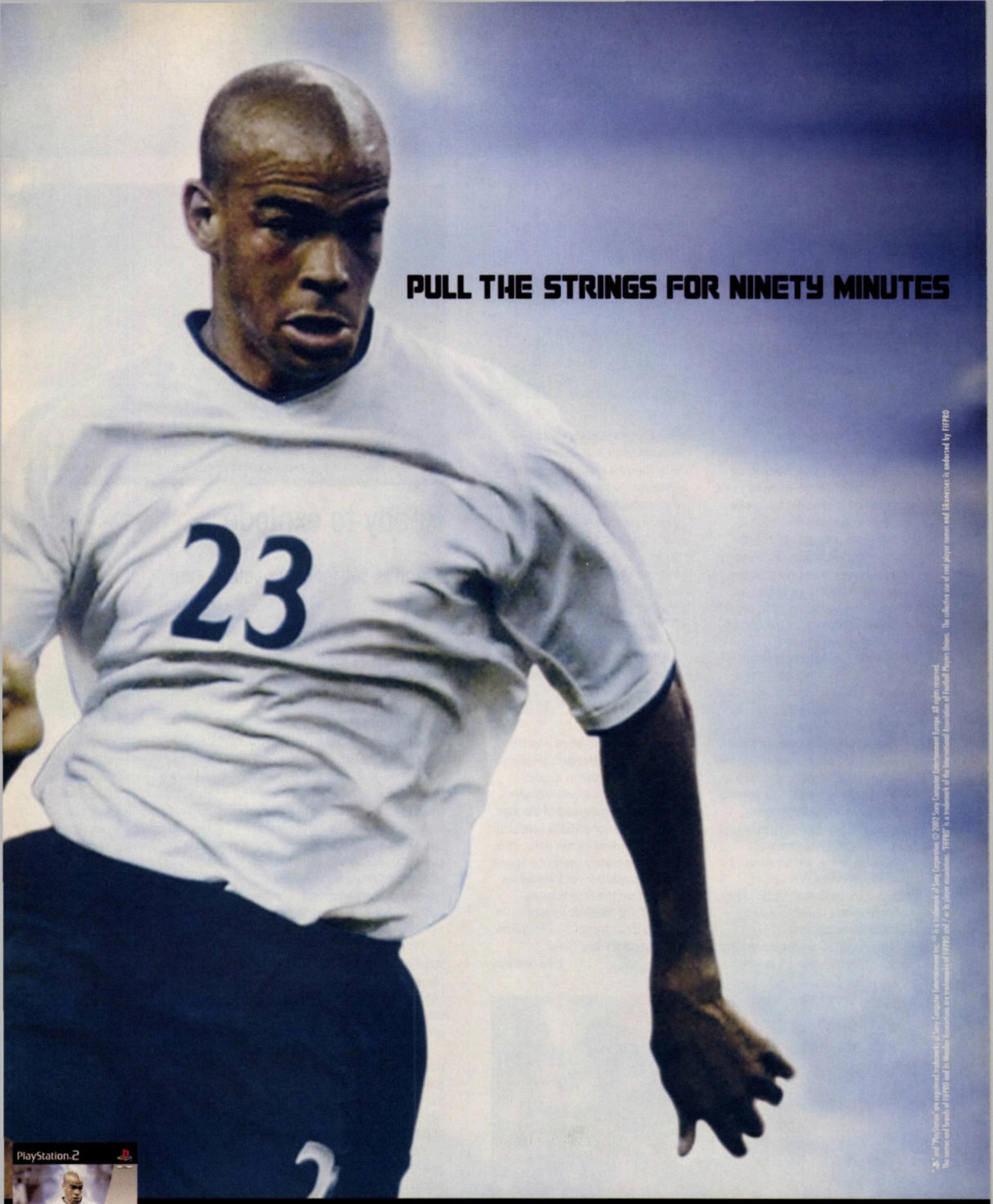

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ARSENAL

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Payback time

Wenger moving closer to ultimate goal

COACH: Arsene Wenger
STADIUM: Highbury (38,500)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Cup-winners Cup (1994); Fairs Cup (1970)
LAST SEASON: 1st, English League
WEBSITE: www.arsenal.com

ARSENAL manager Arsene Wenger is unequivocal about his team's ambition for this season's Champions League. "The next step is to win it," he says. "We can be proud of what we've achieved in the competition in the past four years, but it is never good enough."

After the disappointment of failing – just – to make last season's quarter-finals, having reached the last eight in 2001 only to lose to Valencia, the semi-finals and beyond are a realistic target for the English League and Cup winners.

Arsenal are a stronger side than 12 months ago. The signing of Gilberto Silva and Pascal Cygan have given Wenger valuable options in midfield and defence.

The return from injury of Robert Pires, Freddie Ljungberg and Giovanni Van Bronckhorst will further add to their strength in depth. In addition, youngsters acquired through Wenger's foreign scouting network, such as Jeremie Aliadiere and Habib Kolo Toure, are breaking through. Jermaine Pennant, acquired controversially from closer to home (Notts County), is also pushing for recognition.

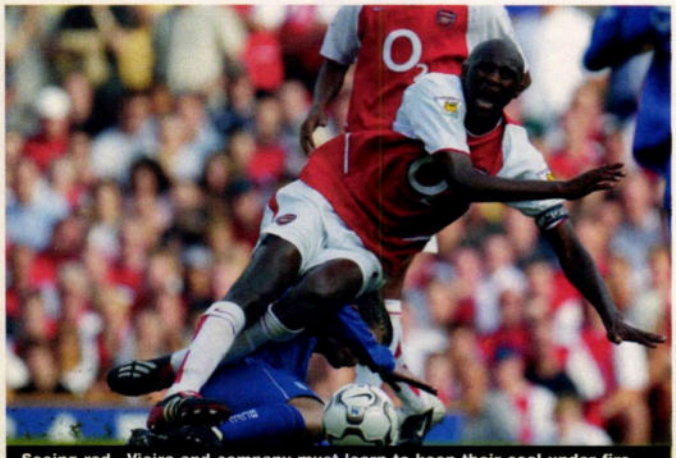
One potential weakness remains discipline. Patrick Vieira's recent dismissal against Chelsea was the 45th red card in Wenger's six years at Highbury. Another is in goal, where 39-year-old David Seaman is fast approaching the end of the road.

With plans for a 60,000-capacity stadium approved by the authorities, Arsenal desperately need Champions League success. Nor will Wenger be unaware that the Final is being staged at Old Trafford. Victory in the backyard of arch-rival Alex Ferguson would be particularly sweet.

Gavin Hamilton

HOW THEY LINE UP

Wenger's team only stray from a 4-4-2 when reduced to 10 men (admittedly, quite often). Their slick, short-passing game takes full advantage of Henry's pace and the tightness of the Highbury pitch (at 101m, the shortest in last year's competition). The defence remains a key Arsenal strength, with Cygan likely to replace the injury-prone Keown at some point. Pires and Ljungberg will provide a huge threat on the flanks and through the middle when they return from injury. Kanu is a clever replacement for Bergkamp, while Wenger may be forced to find space for the in-form Wiltord in either midfield or attack.



Seeing red...Vieira and company must learn to keep their cool under fire

Striker extraordinaire...Djibril Cisse (right) will pose a hatful of problems

Ready to explode

Stage is set for Guy's young guns

COACH: Guy Roux
STADIUM: Stade de L'Abbe-Deschamps (21,000)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: None
LAST SEASON: 3rd, French League
WEBSITE: www.aja.tm.fr

THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE is an absolute godsend for Auxerre. Their 1-0 aggregate victory over Boavista in the third qualifying round means a substantial cash windfall for a small-town club that has always had to count every penny. Not only that but it was also the decisive factor in coach Guy Roux's successful charm offensive to retain his two most coveted young performers – centre-back Philippe Mexes and striker extraordinaire Djibril Cisse.

Without the Champions League stage on which to strut their stuff, Mexes and Cisse might well have left for Italy, England or Spain. Now they will help keep Auxerre competitive for at least another term.

In a season, tales of Cisse's power, pace, athleticism and spectacular goals have criss-crossed the continent. If anyone seems destined for superstardom, it is he of the multi-coloured coiffure.

But as the evergreen Roux – 63 and in his 41st season in charge – points out, Auxerre is not merely Cisse. Attacking midfielders Yann Lachuer, Olivier Kapo and Senegalese World Cup hero Khalilou Fadiga serve as the perfect complement; France Under-21 central defender Jean-Alain Boumsong could easily emerge as the long-term replacement for Marcel Desailly in *Les Bleus*, while Fabien Cool is an underrated keeper.

Auxerre's main weakness is lack of strength in depth. Their only recruits of note this summer were young Swiss centre-back Stephane Grichting and Zimbabwe forward Benjamin Mwaruwari. Though the club's academy continues to churn out talent – the latest examples being forward Arnaud Gonzalez and defender Jean-Noel Perrier Doumbe – cover remains thin on the ground.

But if everyone stays healthy, Auxerre could spring a surprise or two.

Nick Bidwell

HOW THEY LINE UP

After years of playing with two wingers and carving man-for-man marking in stone, Guy Roux has a quite different modus operandi these days. A flat back four, featuring the aerial power of Mexes and Boumsong, defends in zones, while Roux's 4-5-1 system is an essentially counter-attacking creation. The aim is to set Cisse and company in motion as quickly as possible, and the style is very direct, with lots of long balls delivered from the back, and deep, high crosses from the flanks.

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BARCELONA

BASLE

King Louis returns

But Van Gaal will find it harder second time around

COACH: Louis Van Gaal
STADIUM: Camp Nou (98,109)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Champions League/Champions Cup (1992); Cup-winners Cup (1979, 1982, 1989, 1997); Fairs Cup (1958, 1960, 1966); Supercup (1993, 1998)
LAST SEASON: 4th, Spanish League
WEBSITE: www.fcbarcelona.com

BARCELONA had no problem overcoming Legia Warsaw 4-0 on aggregate to qualify for the Champions League group phase, but nothing can now be taken for granted.

It is three years since they last won any sort of trophy, and the jury remains firmly out on whether reappointing Louis Van Gaal as coach is the best way forward.

HOW THEY LINE UP

Victor Valdes
Puyol De Boer F Navarro
Mendieta Gabri Xavi Cocu
Saviola Luis Enrique
Kluivert

Van Gaal has amended the preferred shape from his first stint at Camp Nou. The pre-season and early League evidence suggests a more pragmatic disposition to provide greater strength in and around the engine-room. De Boer remains the kingpin at the centre of a three-man back row, with a line of four strung across midfield. Beyond them are two old-fashioned inside-forwards, Saviola and Luis Enrique. They support Kluivert, happy to have moved forward back into the central striker's role. The versatility of Luis Enrique and Cocu may be the ultimate key to finding a place and a role for Riquelme.

In the thick of it...Kluivert

Van Gaal arrives at a very different club than he did in 1997. Then Josep Nunez was president and Dutch football provided fertile ground from which to replenish the Barcelona playing staff.

Now, with the Catalans sinking into the red, Van Gaal must make do with what he has – an interesting test of his coaching mettle.

The Dutchman quickly established his authority with the effective sacking of Rivaldo. The Brazilian, with whom Van Gaal never saw eye to eye during his first spell at the club, had his contract cancelled, enabling him to join Milan on a free transfer.

The great uncertainty is how Van Gaal may choose to utilise their one big summer signing, Argentinian playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme. He is already hugely popular with the fans but has been used only cautiously by the coach.

Riquelme's football personality demands a more individually commanding role than Van Gaal appears ready to give him, at least for the time being.

Keir Radnedge

Grafting...Basle's Antonio Esposito in the qualifying round struggle with Celtic

Aiming high

Gross thinks big with Swiss champions

COACH: Christian Gross
STADIUM: St Jakob Park (29,500)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: None
LAST SEASON: 1st, Swiss League
WEBSITE: www.fcb.ch

HOW THEY LINE UP

Zuberbuhler
Degen M Yakin Quennoz Atouba
Varela Cantaluppi Savic
H Yakin
Rossi Gimenez

Injuries have weakened the defence and midfield, with Australian midfielder Chipperfield (torn knee ligaments) and Zwyssig (broken leg) both out for three months. The Yakin brothers are key figures, Murat in defence and Hakan behind the strikers. Gross has plenty of options in attack, of which Gimenez was top scorer last season. Other forward options are another Argentinian, Rossi, South African international Koumantarakis and Cameroon's Tum.

CHRISTIAN GROSS, coach of Swiss champions Basle, says he always tries to live up to his name by aiming high and thinking big.

"When we won the Double last season, I targeted the Champions League, which Basle had never qualified for, as my next aim," said Gross, who steered Grasshopper into the Champions League in 1995 and 1997 before an ill-fated spell in England with Tottenham.

Basle were 3-1 down after the first leg of the third qualifying round tie against Celtic in Glasgow.

But the 42-year-old Gross was undeterred, exhorting his charges in a fiery pep talk before the return leg. Argentinian striker Christian Gimenez scored in the eighth minute and captain Murat Yakin headed home the second 14 minutes later, levelling the aggregate score and sending Basle through on away goals.

Basle's strength is up front where Gross has a surplus of strikers, forcing him to introduce an unpopular rotation system. Even leading man Gimenez has not avoided substitution

All tickets for the home games in Group B against Moscow Spartak, Valencia and Liverpool sold out within 30 minutes of going on sale. The club boasts 20,000 season ticket holders – one of the benefits of being situated on the bend of the Rhine, bordered by both France and Germany.

Even if they do not progress further, Gross insists that his players fully deserve their £20,000 bonus for qualifying.

But while Basle and Swiss football celebrate, the club's hierarchy is in some disarray following the departure of president Rene Jaggi, who has taken over Germany's Kaiserslautern.

Ivar von Rulach

Transition time

Toppi fights to ditch 'Neverkusen' tag

COACH: Klaus Toppmoller
STADIUM: BayArena (25,050)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: UEFA Cup (1988)
LAST SEASON: 2nd, German League
WEBSITE: www.bayer04.de

ON THE evidence of the opening weeks of this season, Bayer Leverkusen will have to improve markedly if they are to rediscover the outstanding form that made them worthy Champions League runners up in 2001-02.

Of course, two points from their first three fixtures of the campaign is no crisis. But there was much to concern coach Klaus Toppmoller.

Voted Germany's coach of last season, 'Toppi' could not fail to spot the wastefulness of his strikers, a defence lacking in cohesion, and a midfield shorn both of bite and craft. "We look like a team of old men," he declared.

This season was always likely to be transitional for Leverkusen. With star midfielders Michael Ballack and Ze Roberto choosing to decamp to Bayern Munich, and club skipper and defensive kingpin Jens Nowotny sidelined until the New Year after a knee operation, Toppmoller had enough problems. However, he has also had to contend with players suffering from World Cup fatigue.

Brazilian centre-back Lucio, Turkish schemer Yildiray Basturk and Germany's Bernd Schneider, Oliver Neuville and Carsten Ramelow all went the distance in the Far East, and it is no coincidence each has started the new campaign in sluggish mode.

No one doubts Leverkusen will bounce back. The bulk of the team that produced such bright football last term remains, new signings such as Czech midfielder Jan Simak and Brazilian pair of centre-back Juan and striker Franca are of the highest calibre, and Toppmoller is a fine organiser and leader.

Yet even he needs time to rebuild, and that commodity is in short supply.

Nick Bidwell

HOW THEY LINE UP

Toppmoller prefers a settled side and has never espoused the rotation concept so dear to the likes of Bayern's Ottmar Hitzfeld. But he does like to ring the tactical changes, switching from three to four at the back or employing one, two or three in attack. So far this season, his preferred formation has been 4-4-2, a set-up notable for its use of three genuine attacking midfielders in Schneider, Basturk and Simak.

Catching up...Oliver Neuville (left) has yet to shake off World Cup fatigue

Jump to it...Hasan Salihamidzic and company face a difficult opening group

The mean machine

Tough test for 'strongest ever' squad

COACH: Ottmar Hitzfeld
STADIUM: Olympiastadion (60,000)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Champions League/Champions Cup (1974, 1975, 1976, 2001); Cup-winners Cup (1967); UEFA Cup (1996); Supercup (1996)
LAST SEASON: 3rd, German League
WEBSITE: www.fcbayern.t-online.de

BAYERN vice-president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge's assertion that the squad is the strongest in the club's history is to be put to the test straight away in Europe.

Drawn in a cut-throat first round group with Deportivo La Coruna and Milan plus the underrated Lens, Bayern undoubtedly face the toughest task of all the top seeds. There will be no place for autumnal rustiness as they seek to progress towards their sixth consecutive appearance in the knockout stages.

"This is what people call a Group of Death," said coach Ottmar Hitzfeld. "But I'm confident of going through."

So he should be. In the opening weeks of the Bundesliga and in a comfortable Champions League preliminary victory over Partizan Belgrade (6-1 on aggregate), Bayern have looked a decidedly stronger proposition than 12 months ago.

The players seem hungrier, a slick, short-passing game is working well, and most important of all, star recruit Michael Ballack has settled in quicker than anyone dared hope.

No doubt the recent departure of Stefan Effenberg to Wolfsburg has proved beneficial. In times past, all Bayern's moves passed through their midfield general. Now the duties are shared more equitably, and the team's approach work is much more varied.

Worries for Hitzfeld include a tendency for defensive lapses, the injury-prone Mehmet Scholl and Bixente Lizarazu, and Sebastian Deisler's unavailability before December following knee surgery.

Nick Bidwell

HOW THEY LINE UP

Hitzfeld has used 4-5-1 and 4-3-3 systems to good effect during his time in charge at Bayern, but his favourite formation at the moment is 4-4-2. Sagnol and Lizarazu are the first choices at right- and left-back respectively, Linke and Robert Kovac are the usual central defensive pairing, with Kuffour slightly behind them in the pecking order. Jeremies (or Hargreaves) sits in front of the defence; Salihamidzic and new Brazilian signing Ze Roberto occupy the wing-back spots, while Ballack plays an all-purpose role in central midfield, doing his share of tracking back and embarking on his trademark late runs into opposition territory. Elber and Pizarro form the flavour-of-the-month strikeforce.

BORUSSIA DORTMUND

CLUB BRUGGE

Sammer special

...but coach fears hopes are too high

COACH: Matthias Sammer
STADIUM: Westfalenstadion (68,600)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Champions League (1997); Cup-winners Cup (1966)
LAST SEASON: 1st, German League
WEBSITE: www.borussia-dortmund.de

HOW THEY LINE UP

Sammer sometimes uses a three-man back line but more often goes for a flexible, adventurous 4-3-3, with both full-backs pushing forward to effectively make a 2-5-3. Frings and Kehl are versatile enough to defend and create, while Rosicky has the freedom to probe where he sees fit.

DORTMUND coach Matthias Sammer says a place in the second group phase would be a great achievement, while his president, Dr Gerd Niebaum, has much more grandiose aspirations for the Bundesliga champions. Sammer is probably correct to downplay expectations.

For Sammer, there has been too much talk of Dortmund embarking on a winning streak comparable to that of the mid-1990s when they won back-to-back German titles and the 1997 Champions League.

He remembers only too well how his side were dumped out at the first stage last season and knows they will find no easy pickings this time against Arsenal, PSV Eindhoven and Auxerre.

Nevertheless, Dortmund have much going for them. They are a compact, well-organised side, the summer signing of midfield warhorse Torsten Frings from Werder Bremen was a real coup, and they boast the ability to dig out results even on an off-day.

"We didn't always play the best football in the Bundesliga last season," says Dortmund's recently retired stopper Jurgen Kohler. "But without a doubt we had the most effective, most consistent team."

Crucial to Dortmund's hopes will be their exceptional young players. Centre-back Christoph Metzelder was a revelation at the World Cup; the grit, vision and skills of midfielder Sebastian Kehl should soon make him an established international, while at just 21, Czech playmaker Tomas Rosicky has only scratched the surface of his enormous potential.

Defender Christian Worns is fit again after three months out with knee trouble, but Brazilian Marcio Amoroso, top scorer last season, is likely to miss the initial stages with a delicate Achilles tendon.

Nick Bidwell

Heading up...Christoph Metzelder is keen to build on his impressive World Cup

Trond setters

Belgians target second place behind Barcelona

Adaptable...Timmy Simons

COACH: Trond Sollied
STADIUM: Jan Breydel (29,402)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: None
LAST SEASON: 2nd, Belgian League
WEBSITE: www.clubbrugge.be

TROND SOLLIED would like nothing better than to celebrate his last year as coach at Club Brugge by taking the team into the second phase of the Champions League.

But an already tall order is compounded by a schedule that forces Sollied's side to open with a game in Camp Nou against Barcelona, who eliminated them from the UEFA Cup two years ago. The Catalans will be expected to win the group, but any one of the other three clubs can make a respectable case for finishing runners-up.

The favourites to do so will undoubtedly be Galatasaray, while Lokomotiv Moscow will not be dismissed lightly by any Belgian remembering their crushing 5-1 victory over Anderlecht in Brussels a year ago.

Still, Brugge have made their usual blistering start to the domestic season, and that augurs well for the Champions League first group phase. Brugge, who overcame Dinamo Bucharest and Shakhtar Donetsk to reach the last 32, were indebted to Dany Verlinden for their victory over the Ukrainians. He saved two spot-kicks in the shoot-out made necessary by a 2-2 aggregate draw – so nobody could fault Sollied's decision to appoint his keeper club captain after the coach's falling out with Gert Verheyen.

Verheyen continues, nevertheless, in an attack unchanged from last season, when Brugge finished runners-up in the Belgian League and won the Cup.

It is in the other departments that there have been slight changes of personnel. With Nzelo Herve Lembi departed for Kaiserslautern, Sollied plumped for Marek Spilar as his replacement in central defence after watching the Slovakian give a majestic display against Belgium in a friendly.

Serhii Serebrennikov, signed from Kyiv Dynamo, has been less impressive in midfield and may soon give way to another newcomer, Alin Stoica, one of the few players to join Brugge from their great rivals Anderlecht.

Nicholas Harling

HOW THEY LINE UP

Sollied is a stickler for 4-3-3. The great strength is in midfield, which includes current internationals Simons and Englebert. Simons emphasised his versatility by operating as sweeper in the recent European Championship game against Bulgaria. The attacking trio are all internationals: Verheyen (Belgium), Lange (Norway) and Mendoza (Peru). The defence looks rock solid around new Slovakian Spilar. Although the team virtually picks itself there are able substitutes in Stoica, Ristic, Martens, Smolders and Clement, the latter now recovering from the ligament injury that put him out of the World Cup.

Mind games

Depor need injection of mental strength

COACH: Javier Irureta
STADIUM: Riazor (35,500)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: None
LAST SEASON: 2nd, Spanish League
WEBSITE: www.canaldeportivo.com

WITH TWO quarter-final appearances in the past two years, Deportivo La Coruna have firmly established themselves among Europe's elite.

Yet there is surely more to come from Javier Irureta's side. For much of last season Depor arguably played the continent's finest football, beating Arsenal and Man United in Europe and Real Madrid in the Spanish Cup Final in swashbuckling style.

But if they are to improve on the last eight this time, Depor will have to do it the hard way, having been drawn in the so-called 'Group of Death'.

Bayern Munich, Milan and Lens certainly make for daunting company, but Depor are confident. As ever, Irureta and president Augusto Lendoiro have used the summer well, adding Toro Acuna, Albert Luque and Portuguese centre-back Jorge Andrade to the squad. Andrade in particular looks a good buy, bringing pace and power to an occasionally plodding back four.

If Depor can find the devastating quality they displayed at Highbury last season, and which recently brought them the Spanish Supercup against Valencia, they have every chance of qualifying. Much, of course, will depend on the form of telepathically connected front two, Juan Valeron and Diego Tristan.

Should Depor get through the group stages, they'll have to address what some see as a mental defect – twice they have blown a season's efforts in the opening game of the quarter-finals.

Sid Lowe

HOW THEY LINE UP

Depor's game is based on guile, fluidity and incision. Irureta opts for a ball-playing back four, protected by the dependable Mauro Silva. The key to Irureta's approach to each match can be found in who plays alongside the Brazilian – the attack-minded Sergio or the combative Duscher. Now Depor also have the option of Acuna. Victor and captain Fran – or Amavisca – provide the width, with help from full-backs Romero and Scaloni. The latter should give way to Manuel Pablo when he returns from injury. Up front, Depor have an embarrassment of riches, with Diego Tristan and Valeron backed up by Makaay and new signing Luque.

Target man...Roy Makaay is on hand to help Depor's potent attack

Mixed messages

UEFA Cup holders are still down the pecking order

COACH: Bert Van Marwijk
STADIUM: De Kuip (51,177)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Champions Cup (1970); UEFA Cup (1974, 2002)
LAST SEASON: 3rd, Dutch League
WEBSITE: www.feyenoord.nl

MIXED FORTUNES so far this season for Feyenoord. A spirited victory over Fenerbahce in the Champions League third qualifying round was followed, a few days later, by an equally emphatic defeat by Real Madrid in the European Supercup.

But their domestic campaign began well with two wins and a draw from the first three League games.

Goals by Japan midfielder Shinji Ono in both legs against Fenerbahce confirmed the UEFA Cup holders' place in the opening phase of the Champions League. It also meant that for the first time Holland's big three (Feyenoord, Ajax and PSV) will compete in the group stages together.

However, days after the defeat of Fenerbahce in Istanbul, they were outplayed by Real Madrid in Monaco. The UEFA Cup may be sitting pretty in the trophy room at De Kuip, but European football's pecking order remains as rigid as ever.

Feyenoord will not defend their UEFA title they won on home soil by beating Borussia Dortmund in last season's Final. Nor will the man of that match, Jon Dahl Tomasson, be with them as they compete in a tricky but not overbearing first-round group with Juventus, Kyiv Dynamo and Newcastle.

Denmark striker Tomasson was the major summer departure from Rotterdam, joining Milan on a lucrative Bosman free transfer. He has been replaced by Anthony Lurling, from Heerenveen, while other interesting arrivals include Korean World Cup midfielder Song Chong-gug, Argentinian striker Mariano Bombarda and Belgian defender Thomas Buffel.

Young Swedish forward Johan Elmander has returned home to Djurgardens on loan for the rest of the season after failing to gain a starting place ahead of Pierre Van Hooijdonk and Ivorian Bonaventure Kalou. More importantly, the club resisted offers from England for Australian wing-back Brett Emerton.

So even without Tomasson, Feyenoord must be confident of emerging with credit from the group.

John Holmesdale

Joy...Van Hooijdonk and Paauwe

HOW THEY LINE UP

Coach Van Marwijk favours 4-4-2, with Van Hooijdonk and Kalou the preferred front pair. Alternatively, Lurling can play in a withdrawn role behind Van Hooijdonk, whose free-kicks are one of the team's most potent attacking weapons. Kalou can also play wide in a midfield anchored by captain Bosvelt and given inspiration by the forward runs of Ono. Emerton features on the right flank in a variety of roles, while Van Persie can come in on the left.

GALATASARAY

GENK

Back to the future

Return of coach Terim raises Turkish hopes

COACH: Fatih Terim
STADIUM: Ali Sami Yen (22,115)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: UEFA Cup (2000); Supercup (2000)
LAST SEASON: 1st, Turkish League
WEBSITE: www.galatasaray.org.tr

FATIH TERIM has returned to Turkey's leading club after 812 days – the fans were counting – in Italy. Three wins in his first three games confirmed their belief that it was well worth the wait.

Not that Galatasaray were unsuccessful in his absence. Under Romanian Mircea Lucescu, they were unbeaten at home and won the Turkish League. But things did not seem quite right.

Terim, under whom Galatasaray won the UEFA Cup in 2000, is quickly rebuilding the club in his own image. He has brought back his former charge Umit Davala from Milan, while midfielder Hakan Unsal has returned from Blackburn Rovers, who he joined last year after a bust-up with Lucescu.

They join many old favourites, including Bulent Korkmaz, Arif Erdem, Hasan Sas and Ergun Penbe, and the players now talk of the rebirth of the Galatasaray "family".

Terim has also bolstered a slimline strike force (Arif and the inexperienced Umit Karan) with Brazilian Christian from Bordeaux.

However, the man he is grooming as the linchpin of an aggressive side is a Lucescu find. Brazilian midfielder Joao Batista fights with enthusiasm and is just the sort of player Terim likes.

Never short on ambition, Terim has high hopes for the Champions League campaign. "We should get through the group stage," he said after the draw, which teamed his side with Lokomotiv Moscow, Club Brugge and Barcelona, their nemesis last year. "For a team like Galatasaray the word fear should not even exist."

Terim has scores to settle after his sacking from Milan. Nothing would be sweeter than European success, beating Carlo Ancelotti's side on the way. "I wanted to be drawn with one of the Italian teams," he said. "It could have been nostalgic. Let's hope we'll meet later on."

Suna Erdem

HOW THEY LINE UP

Terim's Galatasaray will probably start off with a 4-4-2, but it is an attacking formation, with the full-backs Hakan and Umit Davala happier in midfield than defence. The coach regularly changes his starting team and has strong substitutes. With the likes of new signings Fabio Pinto, Balic and Cihan, as well as the talented ex-Bayern forward Berkant and Turkey defender Emre Asik on the bench, even the B team could make the top three in the League.

Old favourite...Hasan Sas

Crunch!...midfielder Josip Skoko (left) goes in hard for Genk

Meek and modest

Belgian champions target UEFA Cup spot

COACH: Sef Vergoossen
STADIUM: Fenix (23,511)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: None
LAST SEASON: 1st, Belgian League
WEBSITE: www.krcgenk.be

BELGIUM have two clubs in the Champions League for the first time, but there is no way domestic champions Racing Genk should progress. Dutch coach Sef Vergoossen knows only too well that with European champions Real Madrid and Roma among his team's opponents, third spot and a UEFA Cup place is the most realistic target.

Which is why Genk's first game, at home to AEK Athens, is so vital. Although the group has an impossible look about it, the schedule has not been unkind to Genk, who could benefit by finishing at home to Real, who may well be group winners by then and field a weakened team.

Much has changed since Genk's first venture into Europe as Cup winners under Aime Anthuenis in 1998. They went out in the second round to eventual runners-up Real Mallorca on away goals. With their ground not fit for Europe then, Genk played in Brussels, and it was in another temporary home – Standard Liege's ground – that as champions they went out of Europe the following year to Maribor.

Now, however, with the Fenixstadion renovated and virtually unrecognisable, Genk can stay at home and take on the best. Vergoossen has restored the good times and is banking on much the same team that regained the title. Gambian Seyfo Soley has forced his way into central defence, which means there is no place for two of last season's regulars, Hans Leenders and Wilfried Delbroek.

Of the four new signings – Japanese midfielder Takayuki Suzuki (Kashima Antlers), Kevin Vandenbergh (Westerlo), Vincent Euvrard (Cercle Bruges) and Croatian defender Igor Tomasic, who followed Vergoossen from Roda – the latter is making the greatest claims to a starting place.

Nicholas Harling

HOW THEY LINE UP

It was typical of Genk that they should qualify for the Champions League the hard way by losing 4-2 at Sparta Prague, after being 2-1 up, to go through on away goals having won 2-0 at home. This team concede almost as many goals as they score. Vergoossen, who prefers 4-4-2, may do well to emphasise the need for caution given the calibre of the opposition. If nothing else, Genk may possess more cohesion since the side has changed little from last season. Up front, Sonck and Dagano, first and third in the Belgium League's scorers' chart last season, will take a lot of containing.

Life after Ronaldo

Cuper's troopers look stronger than ever

COACH: Hector Cuper
STADIUM: Giuseppe Meazza (85,700)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Champions Cup (1964, 1965); UEFA Cup (1991, 1994, 1998)
LAST SEASON: 3rd, Italian League
WEBSITE: www.inter.it

ALTHOUGH twice winners of the Champions Cup in the 1960s, Inter have a debt with recent Champions League history since their last appearance two seasons ago saw them humiliatingly eliminated by Swedish side Helsingborgs in the third qualifying round.

Notwithstanding the departure of Brazilian ace Ronaldo – indeed, perhaps, thanks to his departure – Inter look stronger than ever this year. Firstly, they have picked up interesting buys in Argentinians Hernan Crespo and Matias Almeyda, as well as Italian internationals Fabio Cannavaro and Francesco Coco.

Secondly, Argentinian coach Hector Cuper comes into the season in a doubly strong position, having done well in his first year in Italy last season and having emerged strengthened from the Ronaldo fracas. When their backs were put to the wall, Inter made it clear that if they had to choose between the Brazilian striker and the Argentinian coach, then they would opt for the latter.

Reasonable pre-season form and their Champions League qualification at the expense of Sporting Lisbon suggest that Inter have already got much of their act together.

Reservations concern two fairly obvious considerations. Firstly, given last year's last-day Serie A title loss, Inter seem certain to reserve their best shot for the domestic contest. Secondly, Cuper's tendency to play the classic defensive game, so successfully employed with Valencia, may fail to maximise the potential of his talented squad.

Paddy Agnew

Leader of the line...Christian Vieri

HOW THEY LINE UP

Toldo
Cannavaro Materazzi Cordoba
I Zanetti Almeyda Di Biagio Coco
Dalmat
Vieri Crespo

With an attack jointly led by Vieri and either Argentinian Crespo or Uruguayan Recoba, and with talented Frenchman Dalmat in the playmaker role, the attacking potential of this Inter hardly needs underlining. Newcomers Almeyda and Coco join Di Biagio and Argentinian captain Javier Zanetti in an interesting midfield, while Cannavaro, Colombian Cordoba and international goalkeeper Francesco Toldo provide a solid defensive platform. If Cuper reverts to a more traditional back four, Zanetti and Coco drop back, Cordoba drops out, and Guglielminpietro and Morfeo become contenders in midfield.

Revenge mission

Lippi's men hungry for success after Euro failures

COACH: Marcello Lippi
STADIUM: Delle Alpi (69,041)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Champions League/Champions Cup (1985, 1996); Cup-winners Cup (1984); UEFA Cup (1977, 1990, 1993); Supercup 1984, 1996
LAST SEASON: 1st, Italian League
WEBSITE: www.juventus.com

EVEN if Marcello Lippi reckons his club have a tough draw – Newcastle, Feyenoord, Kyiv Dynamo – Juventus ought to be good enough to get through their group.

The pressure of miserable failure in the past two seasons of Champions League football – Juventus went out in the first phase two years ago and in the second phase last season – should in itself be enough to guarantee a serious showing.

Juve ought to benefit, too, from last season's last-gasp title win. It not only allows them to concentrate on the Champions League, but also greatly reinforces Lippi's position.

Although Argentinian midfielder Mauro Camoranesi (ex-Verona) and Italy striker Marco Di Vaio (ex-Parma) both look like interesting buys, there are still reservations about a side that is otherwise unchanged. If they were not good enough last season, why should they be any better this time?

Hunger (at least relative) might be the answer. Players such as Frenchmen Lilian Thuram and David Trezeguet, Italians Alessandro Del Piero and Gianluca Zambrotta, Uruguayan Paolo Montero, Czech Pavel Nedved and Dutchman Edgar Davids, for different reasons, all had unhappy summers. Indeed Davids and Nedved did not even make it to the World Cup.

Their desire to leave a European imprint, along with that of Lippi, should mean that Juventus sell their hide a lot more expensively this year.

Paddy Agnew

HOW THEY LINE UP

Buffon
Thuram Iuliano Montero Moretti
Camoranesi Tacchinardi Davids
Nedved
Del Piero Trezeguet

The ideal Juventus line-up has Del Piero and either Trezeguet or Di Vaio playing in front of converted schemer Nedved and backed by a three-man midfield of Camoranesi, Tacchinardi and Davids. In defence, Italy No 1 Buffon will normally play behind a back four comprising Iuliano and Montero in the centre with Frenchman Thuram once again called on to improvise at right-back and with former Fiorentina youngster Moretti or Pessotto at left-back. Croatian Tudor can provide steel in midfield, and Zambrotta is another option on the right.

Waiting game...Del Piero wants to make up for a miserable summer

KYIV DYNAMO

LENS

Lobanovskyi's legacy

Injuries blight new era under Mikhailichenko

COACH: Olexiy Mikhailichenko
STADIUM: Olympiyskyi (82,893)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Cup-winners Cup (1975, 1986); Supercup (1975)
LAST SEASON: 2nd, Ukrainian League
WEBSITE: www.fcdynamo.kiev.ua

THE DEATH of legendary coach Valerii Lobanovskyi in May could not fail to affect the club with which he was so closely associated.

Kyiv Dynamo lost the Ukraine title to Shakhtar Donetsk after nine years of total dominance. Shakhtar also beat them in the Cup Final. Changes were inevitable.

The club began the 2002-03 season with a new president, Igor Surkis (the younger brother of his predecessor, Grygoriy), and the youngest head coach in the Ukraine League, 39-year-old Olexiy Mikhailichenko.

The main target was simply to qualify for the Champions League, and a succession of injuries meant that the preliminary games against Armenian champions Pyunik and Levski Sofia of Bulgaria were treated with great caution.

Within the first month of the season Dynamo lost nine first-choice players. Defence was the worst hit, with Olexander Holovko, Vladyslav Vaschuk, Andrii Husin, Yurii Dmytrulin and Serhii Fedorov all facing lengthy lay-offs. Playmaker Valentin Bialkevich was also sidelined.

As a result Dynamo were unusually busy in the transfer market, spending £12 million on five players: midfielder Badr El Kaddouri from Wydad Casablanca of Morocco, Brazilian forward Leandro (Flamengo) and his countryman Diego Rincon from Internacional, plus two Croats – 20-year-old defender Goran Sablic from Hajduk (the club's most expensive signing) and forward Jerko Leko (Dinamo Zagreb).

The new arrivals join recent youth products Ihor Skoba and Alexander Aliev. The changes have made Dynamo an unknown quantity not only in Europe but also in the domestic League.

The reshuffled side successfully qualified for the Champions League for the sixth season running but how the newcomers will cope against Juventus, Feyenoord and Newcastle remains to be seen.

Oleg Zadernovsky

HOW THEY LINE UP

Kyiv Dynamo have stuck to a 4-5-1 system. Because of the injuries, the back line is constantly changing, with some players, such as Radchenko, proving their worth in a variety of positions. Gavrancic and Husin are the holding midfielders, with Skoba and Khatskevich as other options. Romanian Chernat plays behind the one forward, with Melaschenko or Rincon as alternatives. Shatskikh is the regular man up front.

Bedding in...Badr El Kaddouri

Up and at 'em...Rigobert Song (bottom) has settled in quickly at Lens

No surrender

Muller's men have a fighting chance

COACH: Joel Muller
STADIUM: Stade Felix-Bollaert (41,649)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: None
LAST SEASON: 2nd, French League
WEBSITE: www.rclens.fr

THERE'S no doubt that Lens drew the short straw when placed in the same group as the titans of Bayern Munich, Deportivo La Coruna and Milan. Yet anyone who thinks they will merely submit to supposedly superior firepower in the weeks ahead may be in for a shock.

Since taking over at the start of last season, coach Joel Muller has moulded a tightly knit unit brimming with character. At the same time, a stubborn refusal to accept defeat has become part of the Lens psyche.

A recent 2-2 draw at Nantes perfectly exemplified their spirit. Two down early on and second-best for much of the game, they still found the resources to break out.

The consensus this summer was that Lens would struggle after losing El Hadji Diouf and defensive bulwark Valerien Ismael to Liverpool and Olympiakos respectively. Not so. The cocktail mixed by Muller has retained its kick. Cameroon captain Rigobert Song has settled in central defence after moving from West Ham, while head of recruitment Jean-Luc Lamarche lured Nigerian forward John Utaka from Al Saad of Qatar.

Expect Lens to have an African feel. Thirteen members of the squad hail from that continent, including Senegalese World Cup heroes Pape Bouba Diop and Ferdinand Coly.

Nick Bidwell

HOW THEY LINE UP

Joel Muller is basically a 4-4-2 man, though he is not tied to the concept. At times he has turned to a three-man defence with wing-backs, and on perilous away days he has no hesitation in using a 4-5-1, with Moreira left to lead the line on his own. Crucial to Lens' style are the runs from deep of Moreira, the left-wing crosses of Pedron and Sibierski's ability to make late, decisive runs into the box.

Anfield angst

Domestic title is target for Houllier and co

COACH: Gerard Houllier
STADIUM: Anfield (45,362)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Champions League/ Champions Cup (1977, 1978, 1981, 1984); UEFA Cup (1973, 1976, 2001); Supercup (1977, 2001)
LAST SEASON: 2nd, English League
WEBSITE: www.liverpoolfc.net

LIVERPOOL were welcomed back into the higher echelons of European club football last season, but their defensive style rarely set the pulse racing.

Their first Champions League campaign was ended by Bayer Leverkusen in the quarter-finals, but a more serious distraction took place off the pitch, with the life-threatening illness suffered by coach Gerard Houllier. Now, with Houllier back in charge, the pursuit of honours is being stepped up again. However, domestic success may be more of a priority – under Houllier, Liverpool have finished fourth, third and second in the past three seasons.

Nevertheless, the squad has been strengthened over the summer with the arrival of Senegalese World Cup pair El Hadji Diouf and Salif Diao, new French cap Bruno Cheyrou, and the recovery from a serious viral illness of German defender Markus Babbel.

Certainly, Diouf's arrival could open up Liverpool's attacking play. At times last season, Liverpool were too reliant on the direct Gerrard-Owen route one to goal.

Once again, Liverpool's patient approach play is likely to yield results from the group stages. But they will need to show greater urgency and creativity in attack to progress beyond the quarter-finals.

Gavin Hamilton

HOW THEY LINE UP

The arrival of Diouf has given Houllier a new pairing up front, and seen Heskey move to the left of midfield, where Riise can also be highly effective. Gerrard and Hamann are a powerful pair in central midfield, with Gerrard's fast long passes to Owen a key weapon. New signings Cheyrou and Diao will also be expected to contribute. Hyypia and Henchoz are well established in central defence, but the full-back pairing is less certain. Carragher can play in a number of positions, while Babbel's return gives Houllier another option. Smicer and Berger are attacking options in midfield.

In control...Danny Murphy offers Liverpool attacking options from midfield

Pressing game...Ruslan Pimenov is an expert harrier of defenders

Safety first

Russians look to defence to carry them through

COACH: Yuri Syomin
STADIUM: Lokomotiv (30,000)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: None
LAST SEASON: 2nd, Russian League
WEBSITE: www.lokomotiv.ru

FOR the past decade, Lokomotiv, the team of the Russian railways ministry, have been vainly chasing perennial champions Moscow Spartak. Today, Lokomotiv, who are noted primarily for their solid defensive play, are close to winning the national title for the first time in their 66-year history.

This season, Yuri Syomin's squad have conceded only eight goals in 23 League games. Goalkeeper Sergei Ovchinnikov, known as 'The Boss', returned to Lokomotiv after five years in Portugal with Benfica and Porto. He feels safe behind national team defenders Sergei Ignashevich and Gennadi Nizhegorodov, and the fast and skilful South African full-back Jacob Lekgetho.

Lokomotiv's other strengths include their European experience, gained in recent years by reaching the Cup-winners Cup semi-finals in 1997-98 and 1998-99.

Syomin, unlike many of his Russian colleagues, has succeeded in signing some quality foreign players, notably Nigerian striker James Obiorah and Brazilian attacking midfielder Julio Cesar.

HOW THEY LINE UP

Although some of the key players, like Obiorah, Pimenov and young playmaker Izmailov are injured, Syomin can boast the deepest squad in the Russian League. Lokomotiv use no libero. Tiny Buznikin and Obiorah are excellent dribblers and finishers, while Pimenov, who is sometimes used on the right wing in the national team, is good at pressing defenders. Centre-back Ignashevich has a powerful shot and is good in the air. Full-backs Yevseyev and Lekgetho are effective in attack.

Handed a difficult draw with Barcelona, Galatasaray and Club Brugge, Syomin nevertheless insists that the group has neither favourites nor outsiders. His team received a warning, however, in the qualifying tie against Austria's Grazer AK when they conceded two goals in the home leg before scraping through.

Lokomotiv will play their Champions League games at a new 30,000-seat arena that now also plays host to the national team.

Victor Gusev

LYON

MACCABI HAIFA

Thinking big

French champions set their sights high

COACH: Paul Le Guen
STADIUM: Stade de Gerland (42,000)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: none
LAST SEASON: 1st, French League
WEBSITE: www.olympiquelyonnais.com

LYON, newly admitted to the G-14 group of leading European clubs, will be seeking to justify their place at the top table by at least qualifying for the second group phase.

Over the past two seasons, Lyon have enjoyed sporadic Champions League success, notably a 3-0 home victory against Bayern Munich in 2000-01 and a 4-2 win at Leverkusen last season. But now they will be hoping to string together a series of positive results.

"Although we were knocked out at the first round stage last season, we were unlucky," says midfielder Eric Carriere. "We were in a really hard group with Barcelona and Leverkusen, both of whom went a long way in the competition. But neither were so superior to us.

"I hope we have learnt our lessons, and if we can get through the first round, anything is possible."

Not that Carriere's blueprint will be easy to put into practice. Once again, Lyon have been drawn in a tough group – this time alongside Internazionale, Ajax and Rosenborg – and worryingly for new coach Paul Le Guen, they seem to be suffering with a split personality this term.

At home, the likes of strikers Sonny Anderson and Sidney Govou have run riot, spearheading a 6-1 victory over Sedan and a 4-1 win against Bastia. However, far from the Stade Gerland, they have cut a quite different figure, too pedestrian in their approach and particularly shaky at the back.

Certainly, Le Guen seems to have a problem with Brazilian World Cup-winning centre-back Edmilson, who is clearly unsettled after a move to Real Madrid fell through and has complained he is not allowed to play with more freedom.

Nick Bidwell

HOW THEY LINE UP

Like his predecessor, the new France boss Jacques Santini, Paul Le Guen favours 4-4-2. But the essential difference between the two is that Le Guen prefers a more attack-minded midfield set-up, with two rather than three enforcers in that sector. Le Guen has plenty of cover at his disposal. Belgian Deflandre will be pushing Chanelet hard for the right-back slot; Brazilian Cacapa could come into the central defensive equation; Dhorasoo represents a fine alternative to Juninho on the right side of midfield, and Vairelles and Luyindula are much more than attacking back-ups.

Spearhead...Sonny Anderson (left) has made Lyon a real force on home turf

Muscling in...Yakubu Aiyegbeni will make it tough for Maccabi's opponents

Fun in the sun

Israel's top team are just happy to join the party

COACH: Yitzhak Shum
STADIUM: GSP, Nicosia, Cyprus (25,000) (Champions League games only)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: None
LAST SEASON: 1st, Israeli League

THE TURNING point in the history of Maccabi Haifa came in 1992, when the club was taken over by current president Yaakov Shahar.

Shahar, an importer of motor vehicles, set about introducing modern business practices to his newly acquired enterprise. He turned Maccabi into a model that all other Israeli clubs eventually copied. None, however, have been as successful.

Under Shahar, the club have become the dominating force in the Israeli League. Qualification for the Champions League promises to make their dominance even more overwhelming. With a modest annual budget of around £5 million, albeit the biggest of any Israeli club, Maccabi can now expect to earn another £2.5m.

Reaching the group stages, by beating Sturm Graz in the third qualifying round, was hailed as the greatest achievement for Israeli soccer since the national team's qualification for the 1970 World Cup finals.

Coach Yitzhak Shum, a member of that 1970 squad and captain at the 1976 Olympic tournament, has a very down-to-earth approach, and knows his team's place.

"Obviously we are not in the same class as [Group F opponents] Manchester United, but on a brilliant day for us and a bad day for them maybe we could do something. We should also not discount the possibility of causing an upset or two against Leverkusen and Olympiakos," he said dryly.

Maccabi's cause will not be helped by the fact that they must play all their home games in Cyprus after the recent violence in Israel and the Palestinian areas.

Ori Lewis

HOW THEY LINE UP

Maccabi's base formation is 4-4-2, with Nigerian Aiyegbeni providing the muscle and pace up front alongside Katan or Cohen. The key strength is in midfield, where the creative Croatian duo of Pralija and Rosso are capable of providing the unexpected. In defence, the central pair of Benado and Ejiofor read the game well, but there is a question mark about whether full-backs Harazi and Keisi have the ability needed to compete at this level. Awat usually performs competently between the posts. He was a last-minute replacement for Davidovich, the team's first-choice keeper, who will miss most of the season through injury.

Final reckoning

...but will Ferguson's men read the script?

COACH: Alex Ferguson
STADIUM: Old Trafford (67,862)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Champions League/Champions Cup (1968, 1999); Cup-winners Cup (1991); Supercup (1991)
LAST SEASON: 3rd, English League
WEBSITE: www.manutd.com

HOW THEY LINE UP

Injuries have hampered United's start to the season, with Keane sidelined for three months, Scholes for six weeks and Brown for even longer. When they are fit, Ferguson faces selection dilemmas. Last season he favoured Scholes or Giggs in a withdrawn role behind Van Nistelrooy. Solskjaer, such an effective supersub, could now start as second striker. Otherwise, options are limited, with Forlan yet to prove his worth. At the back, the promising O'Shea is likely to see action at some point.

AFTER a 2001-02 season which had promised so much ended trophyless, Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson spent the summer in pursuit of Rio Ferdinand.

For £30million, he landed England's best defender at the World Cup – and a host of new expectations. Not least because the 2003 Champions League Final takes place at Old Trafford.

Last season was supposed to end in glory in Glasgow, Ferguson's home city, in what was intended to be his final game in charge. But the failure of United plc to find a suitable successor to their most successful manager forced an embarrassing U-turn and an invitation to him to carry on. Now, with a new backroom staff headed by Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz, it is business as usual.

Certainly, Ferdinand has linked up well with Laurent Blanc to plug the defensive gaps that derailed United's campaign last autumn. At the other end, Ruud Van Nistelrooy continues to demonstrate a chilling sense of purpose in front of goal.

United were given a scare by Hungarians Zalaegerszeg in the away leg of the qualifying round, losing 1-0. But experience told in the return as United romped to a 5-0 win.

The unknown quantity is the extent of United's desire. Ferguson acknowledged that the fat contracts awarded to many players last year took the edge off their game. Captain Roy Keane confirmed this in his controversial autobiography.

Ferguson says: "The players have to live with the criticism. If they can't they are at the wrong club."

Once again an enticing script is in place. Can the players read it?

Gavin Hamilton

Fully focused...United rely on Ruud Van Nistelrooy's eye for goal

Middle man...Gennaro Gattuso (left) keeps Milan's engine-room ticking

Danger signs

Big names under pressure from the start

COACH: Carlo Ancelotti
STADIUM: Giuseppe Meazza (85,700)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Champions League/Champions Cup (1963, 1969, 1989, 1990, 1994); Cup-winners Cup (1968, 1973); Supercup (1989, 1990, 1995)
LAST SEASON: 4th, Italian League
WEBSITE: www.acmilan.com

HOW THEY LINE UP

As of now, it remains unclear whether Rivaldo will be used as a second striker alongside either Shevchenko or Inzaghi or as an inside-forward, playing behind the same pair. If Rivaldo is dropped back, this could mean Portugal's Rui Costa struggles to find a starting place. Gattuso, Pirlo and ex-Inter Dutchman Seedorf should form the midfield nucleus, while 'old man' Maldini has moved to central defence alongside Nesta, with Georgian Kaladze at left-back and Croat Simic (also ex-Inter) on the right.

DESPITE a summer when the signings of Brazilian World Cup winner Rivaldo and former Lazio defender Alessandro Nesta meant Milan dominated the Italian transfer market, there are still good reasons for suggesting that the side owned by Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi could be one of the first big-name casualties of the competition.

For a start, they have been teamed with Bayern Munich, Deportivo La Coruna and Lens in undoubtedly one of the toughest first round groups.

Secondly, like all the Italian teams, the new-look Milan will start off badly handicapped by lack of League soccer, thanks to the delayed Serie A seasonal start, and despite their qualifying round win against Czechs Slovan Liberec.

Thirdly, much depends on at least three imponderables. Will Rivaldo be able to shake off his World Cup hangover and immediately strike something close to his best form? Will Ukrainian Andrii Shevchenko refind his best form, lost for much of last season? Will coach Carlo Ancelotti reveal a previously hidden, less cautious and truly attacking tactical approach?

If the answer to all three questions is positive, then Milan could go far. If not, they could be in immediate trouble.

Paddy Agnew

MOSCOW SPARTAK

NEWCASTLE UNITED

Missing in action

Whatever happened to the patriots' team?

COACH: Oleg Romantsev
STADIUM: Luzhniki (71,856)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: None
LAST SEASON: 1st, Russian League
WEBSITE: www.spartak.com

PESSIMISTS would argue that finishing third in a group featuring Valencia, Liverpool and Basle is the best result Spartak can hope for. Optimists would hope that the club's recent misfortunes at home will force them to concentrate on Europe.

For the first time in seven years Spartak have almost no chance of winning the domestic League. Oleg Romantsev's squad – nine times Russian champions – were trailing behind city rivals Lokomotiv and CSKA with just a few games to play.

Midfield pivot and captain Yegor Titov missed a month due to a knee injury, Ukrainian Dmitri Parfyonov is out with a broken leg, while star striker Dmitri Sychev, 18, broke his contract with Spartak and received a four-month ban (see page 66).

By fielding up to seven foreigners in each game, and only mediocre ones at that, Spartak seem to lack the fighting spirit of previous incarnations, dubbed 'the patriots' team'.

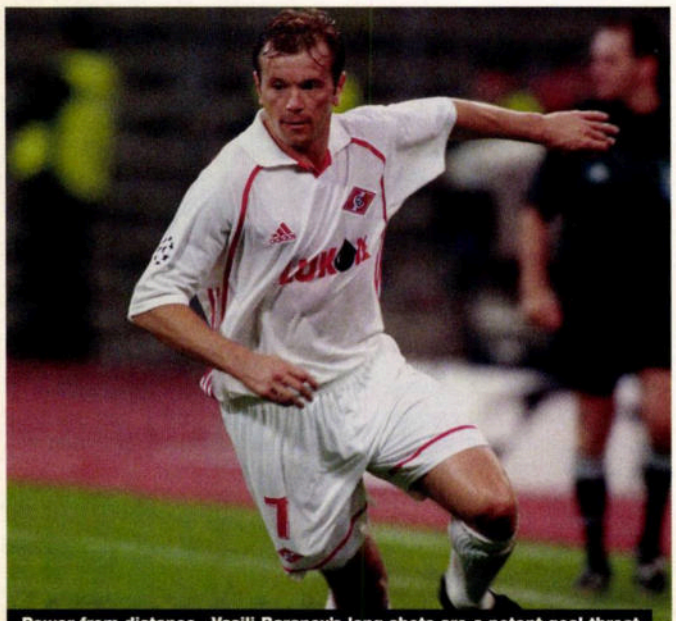
"My thoughts and worries are not about Liverpool or Valencia," says Romantsev. "My main concern is my own team, which lost its leaders almost overnight."

In a bid to rectify the situation, Romantsev brought back 39-year-old keeper Stanislav Cherchesov, from FC Tirol, and wing-back Dmitri Khlestov, 31, from Besiktas. Spartak's hopes rest on these signings, as well as Russia striker Vladimir Beschastnykh, young forward Alexander Danishevski and midfielder Dmitri Kudryashev.

Victor Gusev

HOW THEY LINE UP

Strongly criticised for his defensive tactics in Japan, Romantsev, who left the national team after the World Cup, is now using more attack-oriented schemes with Spartak. It is not uncommon for him to bring in a third striker in the course of the game in place of a defender. Long shots from Baranov and Kudryashev are one of the team's major weapons. Spartak still prefer an old-fashioned short passing game, masterminded by Titov. In defence Romantsev uses Macedonian Mitreski as a libero.



Power from distance...Vasili Baranov's long shots are a potent goal threat

Hands up, who scored...Alan Shearer is right back in form after injury

Bobby's boys

Veteran coach continues to inspire youth

COACH: Bobby Robson
STADIUM: St James' Park (52,193)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Fairs Cup (1969)
LAST SEASON: 4th, English League
WEBSITE: www.nufc.co.uk

BOBBY ROBSON received a special 'lifetime achievement' award at last month's UEFA gala dinner in Monaco. The award was in recognition of his enduring passion for the game. "Football is my life," he said. "I just want to carry on, but it depends on my old ticker. When it stops, I'll stop."

Europe's finest lined up to praise Robson. "He's been an example to a whole generation of coaches," said Real Madrid's Vicente Del Bosque.

Young players remain the inspiration for Robson, who swapped autographs with Michael Ballack after collecting his award. "They keep you bright and alert. If you're not, they'll bury you."

Robson has assembled an enviable crop of youngsters at St James' Park, led by Kieron Dyer, Craig Bellamy and Jermaine Jenas. Together with some old heads (Alan Shearer, Gary Speed) he inspired them to last season's fourth-place finish.

Newcastle made further investments in youth this summer, bringing in defender Titus Bramble (Ipswich) and Portuguese starlet Hugo Viana (Sporting Lisbon). Bellamy, Dyer, Laurent Robert, Lomana Tresor Lua Lua and Peruvian Nolberto Solano are capable of unsettling most defences with their pace, while Shearer is enjoying a renaissance after a spell of injuries.

The Magpies have been drawn in a group with Juventus, Feyenoord and Kyiv Dynamo. The recent failed bid for Australian Brett Emerton will add spice to the tussles with the Dutch. And don't bet against Robson living to fight another day.

Gavin Hamilton

HOW THEY LINE UP

Robson favours 4-4-2, using the pace of Solano and Dyer to force openings for Shearer. Lua Lua replaced the injured Bellamy in recent games, while Ameobi and Cort are other attacking options. Frenchman Robert, outstanding on the left last term, is sure to be used following his recovery from injury. Speed provides a central midfield base, while Jenas and Hugo Viana are also likely to feature. At the back, Hughes can also play in the centre, as can O'Brien, with Griffiths coming in at right-back. Irish keeper Given is an outstanding shot-stopper.

Business as usual

Same players, same challenge for Greek champions

COACH: Takis Lemonis
STADIUM: Rizoupoli (15,000)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: None
LAST SEASON: 1st, Greek League
WEBSITE: www.olympiakos.gr

WITH six straight Greek League titles under their belt, Olympiakos are looking to make progress in Europe. But they will have to do it with basically the same team as last year.

Club president Socrates Kokkalis financed only the purchase of a substitute goalkeeper (Fanis Kateryiannakis from Aris Salonika) and young Brazilian defender (Edu Dracena) in the summer.

Nevertheless, coach Takis Lemonis can still call upon Yugoslav midfielder Predrag Djordjevic, Brazilian forward Giovanni, French midfielder Christian Karembeu and veteran Alexios Alexandris, the League's top scorer last season with 19 goals. In addition, Lemonis will also have forward Lambros Choutos available again after the 23-year-old former Roma player missed most of last season through injury.

Olympiakos do not have a good record when it comes to playing in European competition and usually do not make it through the first group phase. But Lemonis remains upbeat, saying: "We are up against two of the best European teams in Manchester United and Bayer Leverkusen. But we know all about them and they should present us with no surprises. Maccabi Haifa are the unknown quantity, but it should not be beyond us to give a good account of ourselves."

The team will play all their home matches at the ground of Second Division Apollon while the Spiros Louis stadium is refurbished for the 2004 Olympics.

Lou Economopoulos

HOW THEY LINE UP

Lemonis will use basically a 4-4-2 line-up but has also tested a 4-5-1 formation with Swedish midfielder Zetterberg taking over the playmaker role. Also being considered in attack will be Choutos, back after being sidelined for most of last season with injury.

Up for it...Olympiakos' Colombian defender Jorge Bermudez

The miracle man

1988 winners put faith in Hiddink

Tumbling...Dennis Rommedahl (right)

COACH: Guus Hiddink
STADIUM: Philips (35,270)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Champions Cup (1988); UEFA Cup (1978)
LAST SEASON: 2nd, Dutch League
WEBSITE: www.psv.nl

PSV EINDHOVEN will be making their seventh attempt to reach the second group stage of the Champions League. However, drawn in a group with Arsenal, Borussia Dortmund and Auxerre, there is little reason to expect it will be seventh time lucky.

Nobody in Eindhoven is making any grand claims. In fact there is an air of 'what goes around comes around'. A lot depends on the priorities of coach Guus Hiddink, who won the Champions Cup with PSV in 1988 and returned to the club in the summer after his fairytale World Cup with South Korea.

PSV, who were trophyless last season, are obliged to pick up some silverware from this campaign. That means their priorities may lie closer to home.

Hiddink is a vastly experienced coach, with spells at Real Madrid, Valencia, the Dutch national team and lately, of course, with the Koreans. But his preparation time has been short. He arrived in Eindhoven late because of the World Cup and was immediately sent on holiday by the PSV board.

Since returning, Hiddink has spent much time doing promotional work in Asia and negotiating himself a supervisory role for the Korean team, leaving his PSV assistant Erwin Koeman in charge.

At least Hiddink has the advantage that his squad has barely changed from last term. Mark Van Bommel, Kevin Hofland and Mateja Kezman had all hoped to leave, but are still there. Now it's up to Hiddink to motivate them again. "From what I've seen the balance in the team is good, but we need to take more initiative," he said.

Still, a team that won nothing last season and has only been strengthened by talented but inexperienced youngsters will face a difficult time in Europe.

It requires a miracle. But hasn't Hiddink produced miracles before?

Klaas-Jan Droppert

HOW THEY LINE UP

PSV will play a 4-4-2 system with Bruggink playing close behind striker Kezman. The other striker, Vennegoor of Hesselink, will provide fresh legs from the bench. In midfield, Robben and Rommedahl cover the flanks, while Van Bommel and Vogel have key roles in central midfield. An alternative on both flanks is Ramzi, while Van der Schaaf, Lucius, De Jong or Bruggink can play in central midfield. In defence, the veteran Heintze and Lamey understudy full-backs Bouma and Bogelund, while Faber is a good alternative in the centre.

REAL MADRID

ROMA

No contest?

Title No 10 is the only target for Del Bosque's stars

COACH: Vicente Del Bosque
STADIUM: Santiago Bernabeu (75,328)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Champions League/Champions Cup (1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1966, 1998, 2000, 2002); UEFA Cup (1985, 1986); Supercup (2002)
LAST SEASON: 3rd, Spanish League
WEBSITE: www.realmadrid.com

HOW THEY LINE UP

Madrid's tactics will vary little from last term. Del Bosque, having flirted with 3-5-2 in one-off situations, prefers the security of four at the back. That is all the more important for a team such as Madrid, whose defence is not all it should be. Casillas and Cesar keep each other on their toes for the goalkeeping role, with Hierro and Ivan Helguera for protection. The hole in midfield is covered by Argentinian talent Cambiasso. Up front, whether Ronaldo is fit or not hardly matters with Morientes and prolific newcomer Portillo competing for the central striker's role.

VICENTE DEL BOSQUE is on a hiding to nothing. When he was originally handed the poisoned chalice of the coach's job at Real Madrid it was as the last-resort caretaker. He had none of the international charisma of a Ferguson or a Van Gaal or even the track record of a Hitzfeld or a Capello.

But then Del Bosque guided Madrid to two Champions League successes in three seasons. None of his far more feted colleagues can match that.

Keeping the show on the road would be daunting enough in normal circumstances. But president Florentino Perez has given his coach a more astonishingly gifted batch of attacking players than those at any other club. The pressure of expectation at Madrid is always sky-high. Now it's beyond the ozone layer. When you have the likes of Zinedine Zidane, Luis Figo, Raul and now Ronaldo, you do not dare lose.

Madrid made an ideal start to the season. They beat Feyenoord 3-1 to win the European Supercup, the one international trophy missing from the Bernabeu collection; then they opened their domestic campaign with a 2-0 win over Espanyol. Simultaneously, they were top-seeded into a Champions League group featuring Roma, AEK Athens and Genk.

Anything less than top of the table will start the tongues wagging. Del Bosque has started trying to ease the pressure, warning: "Just because we have so many great players doesn't mean we are unbeatable." The trouble is, no one is taking any notice.

Keir Radnedge

Crown jewels...Luis Figo complements Cup-holders Real's star-studded attack

Flying...Roma will again look to the finishing power of Vincenzo Montella

Repeat performance

Same team, same problems for Capello and co

COACH: Fabio Capello
STADIUM: Stadio Olimpico (80,558)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Fairs Cup (1961)
LAST SEASON: 2nd, Italian League
WEBSITE: www.asromacalcio.it

HOW THEY LINE UP

With Batistuta, Montella and Totti in attack, Cafu, Tommasi, Emerson and Candela in midfield and Samuel and Panucci in defence, it is a case of 'as you were' at Roma. The tactics are unlikely to be much changed, with Candela and Cafu supplying the thrust down the flanks and with Totti (or Cassano) to shape the bullets to be fired by Batistuta and Montella.

EVEN IF, for the second year running, Roma have drawn Real Madrid in their first phase group, they should still prove good enough to qualify, at least as runners-up.

Their seemingly favourable draw is just as well given pre-season tensions between coach Fabio Capello and club owner Franco Sensi, not to mention a low-key transfer campaign – Spanish veteran Pep Guardiola was their biggest buy – plus a pre-season injury to captain Francesco Totti.

On paper, this year's Roma are almost certain to look like a carbon copy of last season's side. However, one would hope to see a significant difference in attitude from the timid team who were eliminated at Anfield by Liverpool last season.

While Capello is more than capable of galvanising his men for a good Cup run, a number of considerations suggest that Roma could be headed for further European disappointment, at least later in the competition.

Players like Brazilian World Cup winner Cafu, Frenchman Vincent Candela and Argentinian striker Gabriel Batistuta, all key elements in the Serie A title-winning side of two seasons back, have a lot of miles on the clock. If they lost form, if reserve striker Antonio Cassano fails to make the grade at the very top and if Totti struggles to regain fitness, then Roma could be in trouble.

On the other hand, if the above prove as good as ever, then striker Vincenzo Montella could again be on standby to reap the benefits.

Paddy Agnew

Scandinavia's No 1

Eight in a row for Eggen's old timers

COACH: Nils Arne Eggen
STADIUM: Lerkendal (22,000)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: None
LAST SEASON: 1st, Norwegian League
WEBSITE: www.rosenborg.no

ROSENBORG are the unofficial club champions of Scandinavia after they qualified for their eighth consecutive Champions League campaign by beating Denmark's Brondby.

Following the victories over the Danish champions, 1-0 at home and 3-2 away, the Norwegians can look forward to another autumn and winter of European club football at the newly renovated Lerkendal stadium in Trondheim.

Regular participation in the Champions League – not to mention a likely 11th consecutive domestic League title – has put Rosenborg in a financial position far superior to any other Norwegian club.

Nevertheless, earlier in the season, there were signs of fatigue. A 10-point deficit to leaders Lyn seemed unbreachable. But coach Nils Arne Eggen, assisted by Ole By Riise, steered the ship through, and come August, Rosenborg were topping the table once again.

It has become a familiar pattern. Rosenborg are slow starters, but as the Champions League qualifiers draw near, they discover their true form. The players, many of whom are seasoned campaigners, thrive on pressure and tend to perform better the more important the occasion.

HOW THEY LINE UP

Rosenborg like to attack, defending only when they have to. Their well-drilled 4-3-3 system has a strong spine in Arason, skipper Hoftun, Skammelsrud and Frode Johnsen. The side lacks pace down the flanks, but Enerly and Brattbakk still make effective wide runs. In defence, the more experienced Basma might be preferred to Karadas as a partner for Hoftun. Olsen is one of the few newcomers to have broken into the side, alongside the veterans Berg and Skammelsrud. Christer George and South African MacBeth Sibaya are other options in midfield.

Nevertheless, Eggen insists: "The Champions League is like a dessert for us. The domestic League title is still the most important."

Eggen has announced that he will retire this winter, when Aage Hareide will take over. Hareide has had a long coaching career with Molde, Helsingborgs and Brondby. Confidence is high that he will inherit a side that will qualify for the second group stage.

Sigurd Odegaard

Foot first...skipper Erik Hoftun is a formidable barrier in Rosenborg's defence

Third time lucky?

Spanish champions are back for more

Precious strike...Valencia are goal-shy

COACH: Rafa Benitez
STADIUM: Mestalla (48,724)
EUROPEAN HONOURS: Cup-winners Cup (1980). Supercup (1980)
LAST SEASON: 1st, Spanish League
WEBSITE: www.valenciacf.es

FEW FANS await this Champions League with as much expectation as Valencia's. Finalists in 2000 and 2001, they were cruelly denied a third shot at the title by Rivaldo's sublime overhead kick for Barcelona in the last minute of the last game of the 2000-01 domestic season.

It was a blow they barely deserved, but things were about to get even worse. Or so it seemed. Captain Gaizka Mendieta left for Lazio, while coach Hector Cuper departed for Internazionale.

The new coach was Rafa Benitez, an appointment which met with cries of "Rafa who?". Benitez, they said, lacked the experience and talent to lead Valencia. But the new man proved them wrong in the best possible way – by leading the club to their first championship for 31 years.

With one seemingly impossible task achieved, now comes the next challenge – laying those Champions League ghosts to rest.

The opening group – with Basle, Liverpool and Moscow Spartak – shouldn't prove too hard, even for goal-shy Valencia. Last season, none of the recognised strikers scored more than five times, while the entire side hit just 51 goals in the League, 18 fewer than Real Madrid. The problem was all too clear during Valencia's exit from the UEFA Cup, when they lost 1-0 to Inter at the Mestalla despite dominating. No wonder Benitez spent the summer looking ever more frustrated as the club failed to bring in a striker.

But if Valencia are far from prolific up front, they make up for it with La Liga's most uncompromising defence. Canizares and co conceded just eight goals at home last season, and that meanness will make them a formidable proposition if they get to the knockout stages.

With La Liga under their belt, Valencian sights are set on Final venue Old Trafford. And, say the fans, Manchester could be third time lucky.

Sid Lowe

HOW THEY LINE UP

Despite being billed as an attacking alternative to Cuper, Benitez has proved himself every bit as pragmatic with a solid, disciplined, deep-lying 4-4-1-1 formation. Canizares provides the foundation stone behind a tough, bruising defence led by Argentina's Ayala and Pellegrino. In midfield, Albelda gives muscular cover for the all-action Baraja, who has pace either side of him with Rufete on the right and Kily Gonzalez or Vicente on the left. Aimar is Valencia's creative fulcrum with his quick feet, vision and passing. With Carew, Salva, Mista and Juan Sanchez failing to convince as strikers, Benitez has increasingly turned to versatile midfielder Angulo up front.

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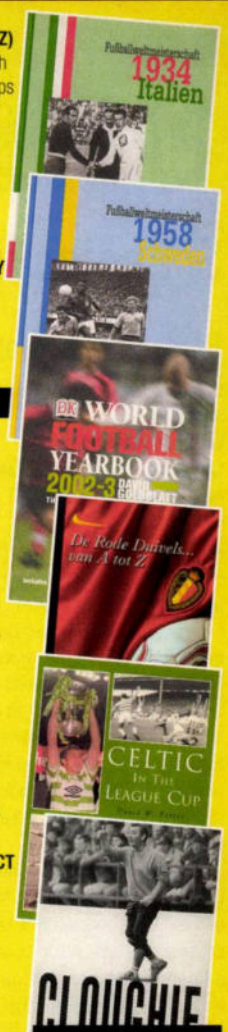

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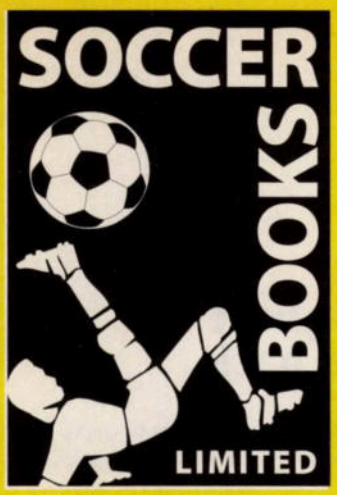

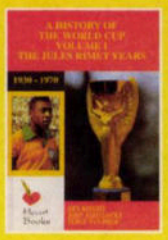

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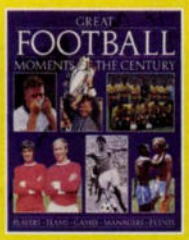

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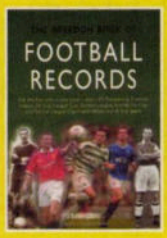

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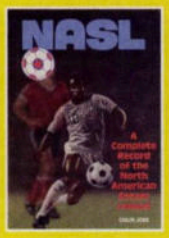

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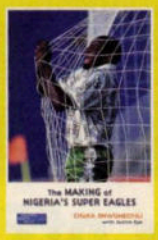

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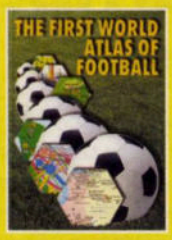

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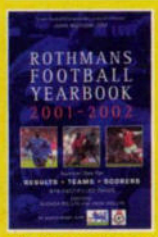

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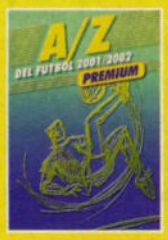

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Volume 1 of the new edition of this bestseller contains details of over 16,500 players who appear for 580 clubs in the top 10 European leagues. Covers all professional leagues in these 10 countries.

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The new 14th edition of this Italian-language yearbook has been released in softback format for the first time. Contains a vast amount of information about football throughout the world.

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Keir Radnedge
COMMENTARY

Glasgow gala...the city won great praise from UEFA for the way it staged this year's Champions League Final

Hats off to Hampden

Scots get 2008 boost from Johansson

SCOTTISH officials may be wishing they had persuaded their political masters to go it alone in the bid to host the 2008 European Championship finals.

The latest confusion over the Republic of Ireland's contribution to the effort is threatening to undo the wondrous impression made on UEFA by Hampden Park's staging of last season's Champions League Final.

As it is, the joint bid from Austria and Switzerland is favourite to win, with Scotland/Ireland and the four-way Nordic bid having ground to make up.

When UEFA's executive elections earlier this year tilted the balance of power away from the Nordic region, so the Scots and Irish got their hopes up. Scottish Sports Minister Mike Watson, bid director John Henderson and UK Sport's John Scott were all justifiably bullish at a Whitehall review of the bid this summer. But that was when they thought the Irish general election had given Bertie Ahern all the power he needed to sort a two-stadia solution in Dublin.

This is now open to question, which is a pity after UEFA president Lennart Johansson's ringing vote of confidence in Scotland's ability to deliver.

Johansson speaks up in the formal UEFA Champions League Season Review 2001-02, published by newly and happily re-enfranchised marketing partner TEAM on behalf of the European federation.

He says: "I can honestly say I have never seen a city throw itself into the organisation and celebration of a Final with as much enthusiasm as the Scots. They may not be a huge nation nor a 'major market' but they are undoubtedly among the strongest in terms of passion for the game."

The review is vetted, word for word, by TEAM and UEFA before going to print so the ongoing tone is not accidental. The review eulogises the manner in which the Champions League Final was "taken directly to the people" via a schools tournament. There is also praise for the transformation of Hampden Park "into an ultra-modern venue".

Johansson concludes: "I don't know what will happen to the UEFA Champions League or to football as a whole in the next 10 years. But I do know that we have to protect and nurture that very special passion for the game." Scotland and Ireland bid officials would say the ideal way to do just that would be to give a Yes vote for their bid.

'The Scots are among the strongest in terms of passion for the game'
Lennart Johansson

The ghost bites back

ROY KEANE'S controversial autobiography has disturbed even more personal relationships than his own with an assortment of fellow players (Alfie Haaland, Jason McAteer, etc, etc).

Now I understand Keane's ghostwriter, Eamon Dunphy, has fallen out with old friend Johnny Giles. The pair used to share TV soccer analysis duty but even that has apparently gone by the board. Giles criticised the book, and Dunphy responded by saying: "John Giles was wrong because I think he should have looked back into his own past." Giles, while commanding Leeds' midfield, had a reputation as a player well able to look after himself.

Torino: we was robbed

RAFFAELE Guariniello is the Turin magistrate who orchestrated the recent investigation into doping in Italian football. Now Guariniello has other football issues to pursue – such as the 1943 Italian Cup.

This trophy is shortly coming up for auction at Christie's in London. Or maybe it isn't. Torino protested to the Turin police that the Cup had been stolen and that former player Natalino Fossati, who has put it up for auction, had no right to do so.

Fossati claims the trophy was given to him by Orfeo Pianelli, a former Torino president. Pianelli denies it, and Guariniello is investigating claims that the Cup travelled a more surreptitious route into Fossati's innocent ownership.

"I have a photograph with my wife, taken in the spring of 1972 before we married, which shows the Cup in the background and thus proves it has been in my home for years," says Fossati. "I have every right to do what I like with the Cup."

The 1943 Cup Final was the last before Italian domestic football was halted by the war. The tournament was not revived until 1957-58, when it had a new trophy. Torino won the 1943 edition by defeating Venezia 4-0 with goals from Franco Ossola (two), Giovanni Ferraris II and skipper Valentino Mazzola. Six years later five members of that Torino team – Ossola, Mazzola, wing-half Giuseppe Grezar, inside-right Ezio Loik and centre-forward Guglielmo Gabetto – were killed in the Superga air disaster.

Alfredo's way with words

THE sight of honorary president Alfredo Di Stefano welcoming Ronaldo to Real Madrid brought to mind the last time a World Cup-winning Brazilian arrived at the Bernabeu in a blaze of publicity. That was in the summer of 1959, when Di Stefano was the greatest player in the world but the then four-times European champions had decided to add Didi to their plethora of superstars.

Didi, from Botafogo, had been Brazil's playmaker when they won the World Cup in Sweden a year earlier. He was 30, two years younger than Di Stefano. Naturally, the photographers wanted a picture of Di Stefano's welcoming handshake.

As they posed, Di Stefano is supposed to have whispered through his smile: "They tell me you've come to take my place. Well, you're too old and you're not good enough."

Nine months later Di Stefano was inspiring Madrid's 7-3 European Cup Final demolition of Eintracht Frankfurt. Didi, by then, was on loan to Valencia with his bags already packed for a return to Botafogo.

I wonder what Fernando Morientes said to Ronaldo?

Demolition work...Di Stefano scores against Eintracht in the 1960 European Cup Final

Four more for G-14

THE G-14 group of Europe's most powerful clubs has grown – but not outgrown its name. A three-hour general meeting in Monaco, alongside UEFA's Supercup party, welcomed aboard additional members in Arsenal, Bayer Leverkusen, Lyon and Valencia. But the name stays.

Vice-chairman Michael Van Praag, from Ajax, said: "The name of G-14 is now widely known in football and there is no point in changing the name every time we invite more members and expand. The G-14 represents the 14 founding members which is now even stronger with the addition of these latest members."

Greater size does not mean greater militancy. For example, G-14 has accepted, reluctantly, UEFA's contraction of the Champions League second round from a mini-league to a knockout round. So disappointing for all those reporters poised to dust off their repetitive "breakaway superleague" stories.

Incidentally, if you see a news item refer to Europe's premier club event as the Champions' League – with an apostrophe – you already know something about the accuracy of the story that follows.

The UEFA Champions League is officially a punctuation-free zone.

Scots' spy taken for a ride

JUDGING how badly Scotland played against the Faroe Islands, it's little wonder group rivals Germany had no reluctance about giving SFA spy Horst Wohlers a free ride to the *Nationalmannschaft's* simultaneous Euro 2004 qualifier in Lithuania.

Wohlers was in the same Borussia Monchengladbach side as current Scotland boss Berti Vogts.

"I am happy to help Horst with a lift," said Germany coach Rudi Voller. "In any case, a lot of things can change before we play the Scots next June."

Like Scotland's German management if they continue to struggle.

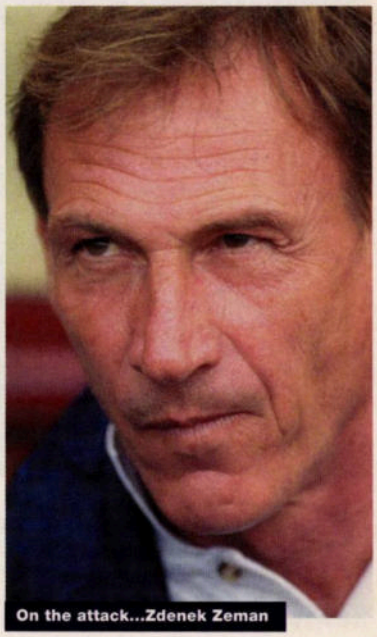
Turning the tables

ALAN CURBISHLEY has suggested, inadvertently, a solution to the ongoing squabble about international call-ups.

The Charlton boss, commenting on the spat over Paul Scholes' fitness, said: "No one thinks enough about the club's needs. But we pay the players' wages. Associations should refund clubs when players are injured on international duty."

But to make it fair, clubs should pay a cash sum to national associations when players have been injured on club duty and are unfit for their country.

It might concentrate a few minds. Think how much the Welsh FA would have raked in from all those Ryan Giggs muscle strains.



On the attack...Zdenek Zeman

Zeman stirs it up – again

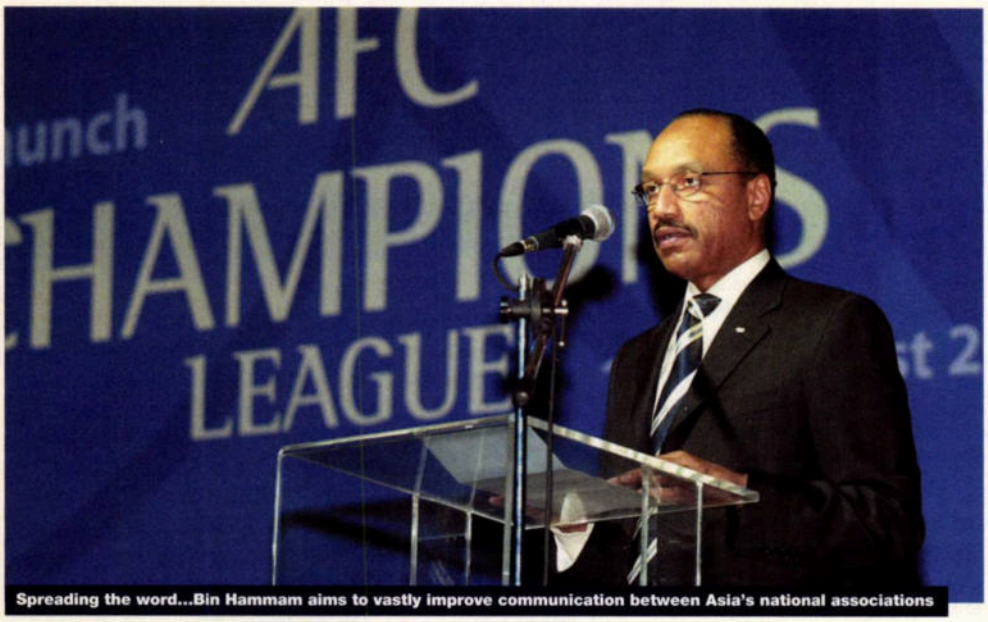
REMEMBER Zdenek Zeman? The Czech coach was the man who originally unleashed the dope scandal in Italian football that culminated in the long-running trial of a couple of little-known Juventus medics.

Zeman is still riding that hobbyhorse and has now tied it in with the incompetence of the men in charge of the Italian game.

"EPO and transfusions have become an integral part of the game here because of the mentality of Italian football," says Zeman. "The pursuit of easy money is to blame for everything. People run for money not the enjoyment of playing the game.

"Look at what's happened this summer. For two months the federation has said nothing and the League has taken over running the game. Why? The League people delayed the start of the championship. Why? Do they have the right to bend the rules?

"Surely rules and regulations should be the responsibility of the federation. But the federation is invisible. The only person you hear is [League president] Adriano Galliani. The federation should be superior to the League, but it seems that the roles have been reversed. I blame the club presidents."



Spreading the word...Bin Hammam aims to vastly improve communication between Asia's national associations

Forward thinking

Newly elected Asian confederation president Mohamed Bin Hammam talks to Michael Church

QATAR'S Mohamed Bin Hammam, who was elected unopposed back in March, finally took over as the new president of the Asian Football Confederation in August. The father of 10 children and key ally of FIFA president Sepp Blatter replaces Malaysia's Sultan Ahmad Shah. He is the first Arab to be elected to the post in the AFC's 58-year history.

● WORLD SOCCER: Which areas or issues need your immediate attention?
MOHAMED BIN HAMMAM: The more I involve myself in the AFC's affairs, the more I see there is scope for more development. I think the AFC is only working at 25 per cent of its capacity, and the other 75 per cent needs to be explored and utilised. We are, so far, not doing well in terms of club tournaments, we are not doing well enough with youth programmes or refereeing or coaching programmes or futsal. We are also not strong enough in women's football. All these need to be tackled.

● Do you already have a plan of action in mind?
I have recommended to the executive committee that, over the coming four years, for logistic and administrative purposes, we are going to divide Asia into four zones. We are going to have four departments within the AFC to manage these four zones. These departments are going to have development officers, dealing with refereeing issues, coaching, administration, marketing and so on. We will also have youth development officers and media development officers. Then after that we will look after women's football, futsal and so on, working as a separate unit. I also expect the associations to recruit the officers to communicate between themselves and the AFC.

I will be giving myself 12 months. And don't forget that if we are going to implement these plans we will need a huge amount of money. I have found a temporary solution for the finance. Some years ago we initiated a programme called AID 26 because it was helping 26 countries. It was my programme, which I proposed to the AFC, and it was doing much the same as the FIFA Goal project. We were well ahead of what FIFA was doing. This used to cost the AFC £1.5million a year. So we have £1.5m now at our disposal. It is enough to get things started.

'Asia has now had a team in the World Cup semi-finals. We will continue to push for five places at the next finals'

● What kind of changes can we expect to see at administrative level?
I am going to work very closely with the administrators and my general secretary, Peter Velappan. But we need to recruit more people in the AFC if we are going to develop it. We need to educate our own staff and teach them at national association level, then maybe keep the same staffing levels but on lower salaries.

● You're well known as being very media-oriented. How do you plan to improve the profile of Asian football in the press?
Asian national associations don't know much about the activities of others from region to region. No one in the West knows about anything in the East – who are the good players, the good coaches, who are the champions. These are an area where I think Asia must know what is going on from zone to zone. I need to establish links between the national associations. From each zone I will have a media officer in Kuala Lumpur [the AFC's headquarters] and we will connect him with the media officers in each of the national associations. I want information in the media to flow into a centre on the same day so news on Asian football can be put out in different languages to each of the 44 associations.

● Asia is still basking in the glow of a successful World Cup. How do you plan to harness this for the development of Asian football?
First of all, all Asians somehow were connected to this World Cup in Asia. They can all be proud. It was the first time I had seen people outside of Korea and Japan supporting Korea and Japan. It can create a little bit of jealousy between the administrators in the national associations, but the fans like the way Japan have progressed and the way Korea perform. I believe at the next World Cup you will see the performance of the Asian teams go higher again. And, naturally, if we are going to divide Asia into zones, there will be more competition.

● Sepp Blatter has already said he expects Asia to receive four and a half places at the next World Cup. You have publicly stated you want five. Will we see another public protest against FIFA?
We are not going to have the same scenario. We have performed and achieved something that other confederations have not achieved yet. Asia has now had a team go to the semi-finals of the World Cup; not many other confederations have had that opportunity. I can assure you that the president has promised us that he will help us for the fifth seat, and the decision will be the executive committee's decision. We need to have understanding from the other members in the committee but we are optimistic. There is a base for our request. We will continue to push for five places.

● You're well known for being very ambitious. Are you interested in one day being FIFA president?
I have just been elected for the AFC. There are four years to run, and I promised the congress that I will develop football in the AFC. I should keep that promise and I'm not thinking about anything else now. It's too early to think about anything else.

● Can you achieve everything you want in one term or will you be looking for longer to complete the job?
I feel the development in Asia needs more than one term and definitely more than one president. There are years of hard work ahead of me and the other president when he comes. Definitely, it needs more than eight years.

WORLDSERVICE

INTERNATIONALS

Friday, August 16

Aug 16 - Santo Domingo - Gold Cup prlm, 1st leg
Dominican Republic 6 (Zapata 16, Contreras 28, Almanzar 33, Mejia 38, 67, R Odalis 62)
US Virgin Islands 1 (Sheppard 44)
HT: 4-1. **Ref:** Forde (Bar)

Saturday, August 17

Aug 17 - Amman - friendly
Jordan 1
Kenya 1

Sunday, August 18

Aug 18 - Santo Domingo - Gold Cup prlm, 2nd leg*
US Virgin Islands 1 (Sheppard 69)
Dominican Republic 5 (Lopez 12, Zapata 14, Sanchez 43, Valenzuela 67, Mejia 88)
HT: 0-3. **Ref:** Jean-Lesly (Hai)
**Tie played in Dominican Republic*
Dominican Republic 11-2 on agg; qualify for Caribbean zone finals

Monday, August 19

Aug 19 - Amman - friendly
Jordan 0
Sudan 0

Tuesday, August 20

Aug 20 - Blida - friendly
Algeria 1 (Haddou pen 61)
DR Congo 1 (Nomikia 36)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Benaissa (Alg)

Aug 20 - Alexandria - friendly
Egypt 2 (Belal 2, 36)
Uganda 0
HT: 2-0

Wednesday, August 21

Aug 21 - Baku - friendly
Azerbaijan 2 (S Aliyev 39, Ismailov 79)
Uzbekistan 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Abdullayev

Aug 21 - Sarajevo - friendly
Bosnia-Herzegovina 0
Yugoslavia 2 (Krstajic 34, Kovacevic 41)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 9,000. **Ref:** Siric (Cro)
Bosnia: Piplica (Tolja 86) - Beslija, Konjic (Ikanovic 39), Hibic, Miskovic (Papac 46), Bajramovic (Skaljic 73), Biscevic, Krivic (Gredic 46), Salihamidzic (Pelak 83), Duro (Hota 46), Muratovic (Halilovic 69).
Yugoslavia: Jevric (Zilic 83) - Mirkovic (N Djordjevic 83), Mihajlovic (Dzodic 68), Krstajic (Stefanovic 46), Duljaj (Vaskovic 62), Lazetic (N Brnovic 46), Dragutinovic (Gavrancic 74), P Djordjevic (Sasa Ilic 68), D Stankovic (Koroman 68), Kovacevic (V Ivic 77), Milosevic (Kezman 61).

Aug 21 - Fortaleza - friendly
Brazil 0
Paraguay 1 (Cuevas 29)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Brazil: Marcos (Dida 33; Rogerio Ceni 62) - Cafu (Belletti 46), Edmilson, Anderson Polga, Roberto Carlos (Junior 46), Gilberto Silva (Emerson Ferreira 46), Kleberson (Edilson 76), Ronaldinho (Kaka 46), Ricardinho (Denilson 46), Rivaldo (Vampeta 46), Ronaldo (Luizao 33).
Paraguay: Tavarelli - Isasi, Ayala, Caniza, J C Caceres, Campos (Da Silva 90), Acuna, Paredes, Bonet (Morinigo 58), Cardozo, Cuevas (Masi 82).

Aug 21 - Sofia - friendly
Bulgaria 2 (Berbatov 21, Balakov pen 50)
Germany 2 (Ballack pen 23, Jancker 57)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Bre (Fra)
Bulgaria: Zdravkov (Ivankov 76) - Kishishev, Kirilov, Pazin (Zagorcic 52), I Petkov, Peev (Georgi Ivanov 61), Stilian Petrov (Yanchev 76), M Petkov (G Petrov 61), Balakov (Bachkov 83), Berbatov (Yankovic 61), M Petrov (Manchev 46).
Germany: Lehmann - Hertzsch, Ramelow, Metzelder (Friedrich 46), Freier (Asamoah 46), Jeremies, Schneider (Borowski 78), Ballack (Zickler 46), Bierofka (Kehl 46), Klose (Ernst 78), Jancker.

Aug 21 - Varazdin - friendly
Croatia 1 (Petric 79)
Wales 1 (Davies 11)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Frohlich (Ger)
Croatia: Pletikosa (Butina 46) - Zivkovic (Tomas 60), Tapalovic (Babic 75), Simunic, R Kovac (Vranjes 60), N Kovac (Leko 46), Saric, Vugrinec (S Maric 46), Rapajic (Bazina 60), Vlaovic (Petric 46), T Maric (M Maric 46).
Wales: P Jones - Delaney, Gabbidon, Melville, Barnard (Weston 60), Pembridge, C Robinson (Evans 70), Johnson, Davies, Hartson (Taylor 60), Earnshaw (Trollope 80).

Aug 21 - Olomouc - friendly
Czech Republic 4 (Koller 32, 65, Rosicky 71, 79)
Slovakia 1 (S Nemeth 16)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 11,986. **Ref:** Douros (Gre)
Czech Republic: Vaniak (Cech 46) - Jiranek (Hubschman 46), Johana, Ujfalusi, Grygera (Holecak 46), Poborsky (Sionko 46), Rosicky, Galasek (Stajner 77), Smicer (Baros 57), Nedved (Simak 46), Koller.
Slovakia: Contofalsky - Kratochvil, Spilar, Timko, Gresko, Janocko, Karhan, Hlinka (Dzurik 89), Michalik (Kisel 68), Reiter (Kozlej 82), S Nemeth (Vittek 39).

Aug 21 - Tallinn - friendly
Estonia 1 (Allas 53)
Moldova 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,500. **Ref:** Kaldma (Est)

Aug 21 - Torshavn - friendly
Faroe Islands 3 (Jacobsen 70, Benjaminsen 75, Johnsson 84)
Liechtenstein 1 (Hetta pen 40)
HT: 0-1

Aug 21 - Helsinki - friendly
Finland 0
Rep Ireland 3 (Robbie Keane 12, Healy 74, Barrett 83)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 12,225. **Ref:** Pedersen (Nor)
Finland: Jaaskelainen - Pasanen, Tihinen, Hyypia (Kuivasto 46), Saarinen, Nurmela (Kopteff 69), Tainio (Hietanen 80), Ilola (Riihilahti 60), Kolkka (Kottila 79), Litmanen, Johansson (Kuqi 60).
Rep Ireland: Kiely (Given 76) - G Kelly, Cunningham (Doherty 46), Breen, Harte (Barrett 76), McAteer (Healy 46), Kinsella (McPhail 46), Carsley (Holland 87), Butler (Kilbane 46), Robbie Keane (Goodwin 82), Duff (Delap 46).

Aug 21 - Budapest - friendly
Hungary 1 (Miriuta 72)
Spain 1 (Tamudo 55)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Fleischer (Ger)
Hungary: Kiraly - Bodnar, Dragoner, Urban (Korolovszky 46), Gyepes, V Sebok (C Feher 60), Low (Halmosi 78), Lisztes (Boor 46), Miriuta, Tokoli (Kenesei 63), Gera (M Feher 46).
Spain: Casillas (Ricardo 46) - Puyol, Garcia Calvo, Marchena (Juanito 46), Raul Bravo (Aranzabal 62), Xavi, Orbaiz (Sergio 62), Mendieta (Joaquin 46), Vicente, Raul Gonzalez (Valeron 46), Morientes (Tamudo 46).

Aug 21 - Reykjavik - friendly
Iceland 3 (E Gudjohnsen 19, Dadason 25, 42)
Andorra 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 2,900. **Ref:** Isaksen (Far)

Aug 21 - Trieste - friendly
Italy 0
Slovenia 1 (Cimirotic 32)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 11,080. **Ref:** Brugger (Aut)
Italy: Buffon - Panucci (Iuliano 46), Cannavaro (Materazzi 46), Nesta, Coco (Zauri 76), Di Biagio (Gattuso 46), Tommasi (Ambrosini 46), Brighi (Oddo 46), Doni, Del Piero (Marazzina 46), F Inzaghi (Di Vaio 46).
Slovenia: Dabanovic - Cipot, Vugdalic, Bulajic, Sukalo (Radosavljevic 69), Siljak (Filekovic 83), Zahovic (Zlogar 89), Pavlin, Gajser (Mavric 89), Karic (N Ceh 76), Cimirotic (Acimovic 46).

Aug 21 - Riga - friendly
Latvia 2 (Verpakovskis 17, Laizans 26)
Belarus 4 (Kutuzov 16, Kulchy 30, Romaschenko 64, 86)
HT: 2-2. **Att:** 4,200. **Ref:** Kaasik (Est)

Aug 21 - Kaunas - friendly
Lithuania 2 (Fomenka 10, Poskus 32)
Israel 4 (Afek 20, 64, Zandberg 48, Tal 73)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Chykun (Bls)

Aug 21 - Luxembourg - friendly
Luxembourg 0
Morocco 2 (Jabrane 72, Kacimi 84)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,650

Aug 21 - Skopje - friendly
Macedonia 5 (Stojkov 37, Sakiri 40, 60, Hristov 54, Pandev 86)
Malta 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Supraha (Cro)

Aug 21 - Mauritius - friendly
Mauritius 1
Reunion 1
HT: 1-1

Aug 21 - Belfast - friendly
Northern Ireland 0
Cyprus 0
Att: 6,922. **Ref:** Jones (Wal)

Aug 21 - Oslo - friendly
Norway 0
Holland 1 (Davids 71)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,356. **Ref:** Stuchlik (Aut)
Norway: Grodas - Basma (Berntsen 82), H Berg, R Johnsen (Lundekvam 46), Pereira (Leonhardsen 66), Tessem (Solskjaer 46), R Strand (Winsnes 78), Andersen, E Bakke, Riise, Rushfeldt (F Johnsen 66).
Holland: Van der Sar - Ricksen, Reiziger, F De Boer, Bouma, Van Bommel (Bosvelt 84), Cocu, Van der Meyde, Kluivert, Zenden (Davids 46), Van Nistelrooy (Hasselbaink 46).

Aug 21 - Szczecin - friendly
Poland 1 (Zurawski 6)
Belgium 1 (Sonck 42)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 19,000. **Ref:** Ingvarsson (Swe)
Poland: Majdan (Kowalewski 46) - Glowacki, J Bak, Michal Zewlakow (Kos 46), Karwan (Kus 46), M Lewandowski, Murawski (Bogusz 66), Kosowski (Kucharski 46), Kaczorowski (Rzasa 46), Wichniarek (Kryszalowicz 78), Zurawski (Marcin Zewlakow 46).
Belgium: De Vlieger (Herpoel 68) - Vreven (J Peeters 68), Van Buyten (De Boeck 46), Simons (Valgaeren 74), Dheedene (P Van der Heyden 61), Englebert, Vanderhaeghe, Baseggio (Blondel 81), Goor (Daerden 81), E Mpenza (Van Houdt 74), Sonck.

Aug 21 - Constanta - friendly
Romania 0
Greece 1 (Giannakopoulos 17)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Tokat (Tur)
Romania: Stelea - Miu (Iencsi 82), Gheorghe Popescu, Chivu, Contra (O Petre 84), Codrea (V Munteanu 79), Galca (Soava 46), Ghioane (Florea 46), Mutu (Cernat 26), Ganea (Moldovan 46), Pancu.
Greece: Nikopolidis (Chalkias 80) - Seitaridis (Amanatidis 86), Dellas, K Konstantinidis (Goumas 46), Kyrgiakos, Fissas (Venetidis 65), Giannakopoulos (Lakis 60), Zagorakis (Basinas 46), Tsartas (Kafes 46), Nikolaidis (Georgiadis 74), Vryzas (Haristeas 46).

Aug 21 - Moscow - friendly
Russia 1 (Kerzhakov 55)
Sweden 1 (Ibrahimovic 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 23,000. **Ref:** Poulat (Fra)
Russia: Ovchinnikov (Nigmatullin 46) - Nizhegorodov (Dayev 46), Kovtun, Onopko (Smertin 2; Aldonin 46), Semak (Popov 56), Ignashevich (Olenikov 68), Yanovsky (Semshov 59), Gusev (Pimenov 35), Khokhlov (Loskov 46), Beschastnykh (Kerzhakov 36), Laktionov (Karyaka 22; Arshavin 75).
Sweden: Hedman (Asper 46) - Mellberg, Jakobsson (Michael Svensson 46), Mjallby (Johansson 66), Lucic, Linderoth, Alexandersson, A Svensson (Kallstrom 76), Andreas Andersson, Prica (Farnerud 56), Ibrahimovic.

Aug 21 - Glasgow - friendly
Scotland 0
Denmark 1 (Sand 8)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 28,766. **Ref:** Irvine (NI)
Scotland: Douglas - Ross, Naysmith (Johnston 71), Weir (Severin 77), Dailly, Ferguson, McNaughton (Crainey 46), Stockdale (G Alexander 71), Kyle, Lambert (McInnes 81), Thompson (Dobie 55).
Denmark: Sorensen - Bogelund (Michaelsen 46), Henriksen (Lustu 84), Laursen (Wieghorst 66), N Jensen, Poulsen, Gravesen (C Jensen 46), Lovenkrands (Silberbauer 72), Tomasson, Rommedahl (Gronkjaer 46), Sand.

Aug 21 - Basle - friendly
Switzerland 3 (H Yakin 19, Frei 41, M Yakin pen 76)
Austria 2 (Wallner 11, 81)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 23,500. **Ref:** Rosetti (Ita)
Switzerland: Stiel - Haas (Meyer 82), Henchoz (Wicky 46), M Yakin (Keller 90), Fournier (L Magnin 76), Cabanas, Vogel, P Muller, H Yakin (Celestini 66), Frei, Chapuisat.
Austria: Manninger - Baur, Martin Hiden, Cerny, Panis (Purk 62), Weissenberger, Aufhauser, Wagner, Wimmer (Kitzbichler 46), Linz (Kahraman 74), Wallner (Flogel 82).

Aug 21 - Rades - friendly
Tunisia 1 (Zitouni 38)
France 1 (Silvestre 18)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 59,223. **Ref:** Bolognino (Ita)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - Trabelsi, Badra, Jaidi, Marzouki, Clayton (Thabet 70), Gabsi (Mhadhebi 70), Mnari (Sallami 59), Benachour, Melki (Ouertani 65), Zitouni (Selliti 73).
France: Coupet - Thuram (Cheyrou 74), Christanval, Silvestre (Desailly 46), Sagnol (Vieira 46), Makelele, Carriere (Petit 46), Candela (Brechet 63), Zidane, Govou (Cisse 63), Henry (Marlet 46).

Aug 21 - Trabzon - friendly
Turkey 3 (Arif 9, Cihan 51, Nihat 71)
Georgia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Agelakis (Gre)

Turkey: Omer (Zafer 46; Metin 81) - Umit Davala (Fatih Akyel 62), Alpay (Umit Ozat 74), Bulent (Emre Asik 46), Hakan Unsal, Okan (Nihat 46), Basturk (Hasan Sas 62), Tugay (Tayfur 75), Emre Belozoglu (Cihan 46), Arif, Serhat.
Georgia: Lomaia - Kobiashvili, Shashiashvili, Sajaia (Shekiladze 73), Gakhokidze (Kaladze 46), Tskitishvili (Burduli 46), Nemsadze (Didava 71), Dzhamarauli, Demetradze (Amisulashvili 80), Kinkladze (Jikia 46), S Arveladze.

Aug 21 - Kyiv - friendly
Ukraine 0
Iran 1 (Daei 56)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Khudiyev (Aze)

Aug 21 - Caracas - friendly
Venezuela 2 (Noriega 18, Gonzalez 20)
Bolivia 0
HT: 2-0

Friday, August 23

Aug 23 - Cairo - friendly
Egypt 3 (Youssef 32, Barakat pen 43, 75)
Sudan 0
HT: 2-0

Saturday, August 24

Aug 24 - Kigali - friendly
Rwanda 0
Kenya 0

Aug 24 - Polokwane - Cosafa CC semi-final
South Africa 4 (T Mokoena 28, 64, Pule pen 78, Fredericks 89)
Swaziland 1 (Siza Dlamini 57)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Katjimune (Nam)

Sunday, August 25

Aug 25 - Luanda - friendly
Angola 1 (Malamba 64)
Gabon 0
HT: 0-0

Aug 25 - Banjul - friendly
Gambia 1 (Samba 58)
Sierra Leone 0
HT: 0-0

Monday, August 26

Aug 26 - Gaborone - friendly
Botswana 0
Lesotho 1 (Shale 30)
HT: 0-1

Tuesday, August 27

Aug 27 - Alexandria - friendly
Egypt 0
Libya 1 (Al-Mossily 72)
HT: 0-0

Thursday, August 29

Aug 29 - Watford, England - friendly
Jamaica 3 (Anderson 34, A Lawrence pen 73, Goodison 88)
India 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Bennett (Eng)

Friday, August 30

Aug 30 - Harare - friendly
Zimbabwe 2 (Johnson 22, 87)
Lesotho 0
HT: 1-0

Saturday, August 31

Aug 31 - Uganda - friendly
Uganda 2
Zambia 2

Sunday, September 1

Sep 1 - Banjul - friendly
Gambia 1 (Jatta 70)
Guinea 0
HT: 0-0

Sep 1 - Wolverhampton, England - friendly
Jamaica 0
India 0
Att: 4,030. **Ref:** Riley (Eng)

Monday, September 2

Sep 2 - Tanzania - friendly
Tanzania 1
Zanzibar 1
HT: 0-0

Thursday, September 5

Sep 5 - Luxembourg - friendly
Luxembourg 0
Israel 5 (Udi 1, 68, Badir 24, Keisi 79, Benayoun 85)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 1,400. **Ref:** Allaerts (Blg)

Friday, September 6

Sep 6 - Prague - friendly
Czech Republic 5 (Smicer 2, Ujfalusi 21, 55, Baros 51, 80)
Yugoslavia 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 5,435. **Ref:** Baskakov (Rus)
Czech Republic: Cech - Grygera, Johana (Bolf 46), Galasek (Kolousek 64), Ujfalusi, Jiranek, Smicer (Nedved 31), Poborsky (Sionko 77), Koller (Lokvenc 46), Rosicky (Jarosik 64), Stajner (Baros 46).
Yugoslavia: Jevric - Mirkovic, Dragutinovic (Dzodic 46), Duljaj, Krstajic, Lazetic (Vaskovic 46), Djordjevic (Koroman 67), Milosevic (Kezman 56), Stankovic (Trobok 46), Bundajevic (Dmitrovic 46), Kovacevic (Pjanovic 83).

Saturday, September 7

Sep 7 - Birmingham - friendly
England 1 (Smith 40)
Portugal 1 (Costinha 79)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40,058. **Ref:** Ovrebo (Nor)
England: James - Mills (Hargreaves 46), Ferdinand (Woodgate 46), Southgate, Ashley Cole (Bridge 46), Bowyer (Sinclair 62), Gerrard (Dunn 46), Butt (Murphy 62), Heskey, Smith, Owen (J Cole 62).
Portugal: Vitor Baia (Ricardo 46) - Beto (Nuno Gomes 46), Fernando Meira (Silva 78), Fernando Couto (Paulo Ferreira 46), Sergio Conceicao (Nuno Valente 46), Petit (Vidigal 65), Rui Costa (Boa Morte 46), Rui Jorge (Capucho 46), Figo (Hugo Viana 46), Simao (Costinha 54), Pauleta (Paulinho Santos 46).

Sep 7 - Reykjavik - friendly
Iceland 0
Hungary 2 (Low 76, Dardai 85)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,190. **Ref:** Maisonlahti (Fin)

Sep 7 - Seoul - friendly
South Korea 0
North Korea 0
Att: 60,000. **Ref:** Kwon (SKo)

2004 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALIFIERS

Group 1

Sep 8 - Luanda
Angola 0
Nigeria 0
Ref: Mathabela (SAf)

Group 2

Sep 7 - Niamey
Niger 3 (Tankary 55, 61, Abdoulaye 80)
Ethiopia 1 (Guirma 16)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Pare (BuF)

Sep 8 - Conakry
Guinea 3 (T Camara 17, Fode 56, Conte 57)
Liberia 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** A S Diouf (Sen)

Group 3

Sep 8 - Cotonou
Benin 4 (Anesti 9, 40, Chomogo pen 74, Latoundji 80)
Tanzania 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Chukwujekwu (Nig)

Sep 8 - Khartoum
Sudan 0
Zambia 1 (Nsofwa 89)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Teshome (Eri)

Group 4

Sep 8 - Brazzaville
Congo 0
Burkina Faso 0

Sep 9 - Bangui
Central African Republic 1 (Tamboula 72)
Mozambique 1 (Fumo 60)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ndong (EqG)

Group 5

Sep 6 - Nouakchott
Mauritania 0
Cape Verde Islands 2 (Zelilo 45, Duarte 60)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Sillah (Gam)

Sep 7 - Nairobi
Kenya 3 (Barasa 62, Otieno 68, Oliech 90)
Togo 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Abdulkadir (Tan)

Group 6

Sep 8 - Victoria
Seychelles 1 (Victor 50)
Eritrea 0
HT: 0-0

Sep 8 - Harare
Zimbabwe 1 (Muhoni 30)
Mali 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Mochubela (SAf)

Group 7

Sep 7 - Libreville
Gabon 0
Morocco 1 (Chippo 16)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Evehe Devine (Cam)

Sep 8 - Malabo
Equatorial Guinea 1 (Mavidi 82)
Sierra Leone 3 (Bah 38, Sesay 46, Mensary 68)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Tavares Neto (STP)

Group 8

Sep 8 - Maseru
Lesotho 0
Senegal 1 (H Camara 35)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Langwenya (Swa)
Sent off: Khalilou (Senegal)

Group 9

Sep 7 - Gaborone
Botswana 0
Swaziland 0
Ref: Moeketsi (Les)
Sent off: Ntshigane (Botswana) 81min

Sep 8 - Tripoli
Libya 3 (Al-Mallian 15, Montaser 37, Ragab pen 41)
DR Congo 2 (Nonda 22, Kikeba 52)
HT: 3-1. **Ref:** El Arjoun (Mor)

Group 10

Sep 7 - Antananarivo
Madagascar 1 (Ruphin 73)
Egypt 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Nkole (Zam)

Group 11

Sep 8 - Abidjan
Ivory Coast 0
South Africa 0
Ref: Coulibaly (Mli)

Group 12

Sep 7 - Windhoek
Namibia 0
Algeria 1 (Benjamin og 4)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Tangawarima (Zim)

Group 13

Sep 7 - Kampala
Uganda 1 (Obwiny 52)
Ghana 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Mohamed Mohamud (Som)

WAFF CHAMPIONSHIP

In Damascus, Syria

Group A

30.08.02 .....Jordan-Iran 1-0
01.09.02 .....Jordan-Lebanon 1-0
03.09.02 .....Lebanon-Iran 0-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jordan	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Iran	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Lebanon	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

Group B

30.08.02 .....Palestine-Syria 1-2
01.09.02 .....Palestine-Iraq 0-2
03.09.02 .....Iraq-Syria 1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iraq	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Syria	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Palestine	2	0	0	2	1	4	0

Semi-finals

05.09.02 .....Jordan-Syria .....(aet) 2-1
05.09.02 .....Iraq-Iran .....(aet) 0-0
Iraq 6-5 on pens

Third-place play-off

07.09.02 .....Syria-Iran 2-2
Iran 4-2 on pens

Final

Sep 7
Jordan 2 (Aburomeh 2, Khalil 30)
Iraq 3 (Farham 32, Mahmoud 89, 103 - golden goal)
Aet. **HT:** 2-1. **90min:** 2-2

EUROPE

EUROPEAN SUPERCUP

Aug 30 - Monaco
Real Madrid (Spa) 3 (Paauwe og 13, Roberto Carlos 20, Guti 60)
Feyenoord (Hol) 1 (Van Hooijdonk 56)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Dallas (Sco)
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Hierro, Ivan Helguera, Roberto Carlos, Makelele, Cambiasso (Pavon 87), Figo, Raul, Zidane (Solari 86), Guti (Portillo 70).
Feyenoord: Zoetebier - Gyan (Buffel 72), Van Wonderen, Paauwe, Rzasa, Emerton, Bosvelt, Ono, Lurling, Van Hooijdonk, Kalou.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

3rd qual rnd, 2nd legs

August 27

Bayern Munich (Ger) 3 (Ballack 26, Elber 71, Salihamidzic pen 73)
Partizan Belgrade (Yug) 1 (Cakar 72)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Colombo (Fra)
Bayern 6-1 on agg

Fenerbahce (Tur) 0
Feyenoord (Hol) 2 (Ono 48, Buffel 88)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Feyenoord 3-0 on agg

Internazionale (Ita) 2 (Di Biagio 31, Recoba 44)
Sporting Lisbon (Por) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Temmink (Hol)
Inter 2-0 on agg

Manchester United (Eng) 5 (Van Nistelrooy 5, pen 75, Beckham 14, Scholes 20, Solskjaer 83)
Zalaegerszeg (Hun) 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Cardoso Cortez Batista (Por)
Sent off: Ilic (Zalaegerszeg) 74min
Man Utd 5-1 on agg

Sparta Prague (Cze) 4 (Poborsky 56, Jarosik 58, 64, Mares 84)
Genk (Blg) 2 (Dagano 25, Sonck 57)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Vassaras (Gre)
Agg 4-4. Genk on away goals

August 28

AEK Athens (Gre) 1 (Wright 58)
APOEL Nicosia (Cyp) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Larsen (Den)
AEK 4-2 on agg

Auxerre (Fra) 0
Boavista (Por) 0
Ref: Collina (Ita)
Auxerre 1-0 on agg

Basle (Swi) 2 (Gimenez 9, H Yakin 22)
Celtic (Sco) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Frisk (Swe)
Agg 3-3. Basle on away goals

Brondby (Den) 2 (Jonson 81, Jorgensen 83)
Rosenborg (Nor) 3 (F Johnsen 29, 72, Brattbakk 78)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Lopez Nieto (Spa)
Rosenborg 4-2 on agg

Club Brugge (Blg) 1 (Ceh 75)
Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) 1 (Vorobei 13)
Aet. **HT:** 0-1. **90mins:** 1-1. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Agg 2-2. Brugge 4-1 on pens

Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr) 1 (Cernat 42)
Levski Sofia (Bul) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)
Dynamo 2-0 on agg

Legia Warsaw (Pol) 0
Barcelona (Spa) 1 (Mendieta pen 68)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Trentalange (Ita)
Sent off: Magiera (Legia) 86min
Barcelona 4-0 on agg

Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) 3 (Ignashevich 6, Yevseyev 32, Julio Cesar 45)
Grazer AK (Aut) 3 (Naumoski 38, Bazina 48, Aufhauser 63)
HT: 3-1. **Ref:** Wegereef (Hol)
Lokomotiv 5-3 on agg

Newcastle United (Eng) 4 (Dyer 23, Lua Lua 37, Hugo Viana 74, Shearer 80)
Zeljeznicar (Bos) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Sent off: Jahic (Zeljeznicar) 69min
Newcastle 5-0 on agg

Slovan Liberec (Cze) 2 (Slepicka 47, Langer 87)
Milan (Ita) 1 (Inzaghi 20)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Dauden Ibanez (Spa)
Sent off: Langer (Liberec) 90min
Agg 2-2. Milan on away goals

Sturm Graz (Aut) 3 (Bosnar 11, Szabics 58, Neukirchner 71)
Maccabi Haifa (Isr) 3 (Rosso 26, Keisi 78, Badir 90)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Hamer (Lux)
Sent off: Aiyegbeni (Maccabi) 69min; Bosnar 80min, Pregelj 90min (both Sturm)
Maccabi 5-3 on agg

UEFA CUP

Qual rnd, 2nd legs

August 29

AEL Limassol (Cyp) 2 (Kyriakou 29, Sebok 86)
Ferencvaros (Hun) 1 (Lipcsei 90)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Lazarevski (Mac)
Ferencvaros 5-2 on agg

Atlantas (Lit) 1 (Tamosauskas 12)
Litex Lovech (Bul) 3 (Roussev 50, Hidiouad pen 62, Jelenkovic 66)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ryszka (Pol)
Lovech 8-1 on agg

Belasica (Mac) 1 (Baldovaliev 80)
Leixoes (Por) 2 (Brito 34, Nene 73)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Dunn (Eng)
Leixoes 4-3 on agg

Birkirkara (Mlt) 0
Metalurh Zaporizhzhya (Ukr) 0
Ref: Johnsdorf (Lux)
Metalurh 3-0 on agg

CSKA Sofia (Bul) 1 (Sakiri pen 64)
Dinamo Minsk (Bls) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Layec (Fra)
Sent off: Dobrovolski (Dinamo) 69min; Joao Carlos (CSKA) 86min
CSKA 5-1 on agg

Djurgardens (Swe) 2 (Wowoah 19, Chanko 21)
Shamrock Rovers (Ire) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Kaldma (Est)
Djurgardens 5-1 on agg

Dundalk (Ire) 0
Varteks (Cro) 4 (Kristic 21, Halilovic 50, Huljev 69, Fumic 79)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Kari (Fin)
Sent off: McCrystal (Dundalk) 55min
Varteks 9-0 on agg

Excelsior Mouscron (Blg) 3 (Dugardein 36, Bakadal 47, Gregoire 56)
Fylkir (Ice) 1 (Asbjornsson 45)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Maric (Cro)
Mouscron 4-2 on agg

Gl Gotu (Far) 0
Hajduk Split (Cro) 8 (Erceg 12, 16, 78, Andric 23, 35, Pletikosa pen 45, Carevic 46, 85)
HT: 0-5. **Ref:** Yarmenchuk (Ukr)
Sent off: Eliassen (Gl) 45min
Hajduk 11-0 on agg

Grevenmacher (Lux) 2 (Manzangala 34, Albrecht 87)
Anorthosis Famagusta (Cyp) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Yaacov (Isr)
Anorthosis 3-2 on agg

HIT Gorica (Sln) 1 (Perja og 85)
Rapid Bucharest (Rom) 3 (Godfroid 3, Schumacher 14, 56)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Hansson (Swe)
Rapid 5-1 on agg

HJK Helsinki (Fin) 0
Gomel (Bls) 4 (Nazarov 32, Blizniuk 55, 90, Razumau 62)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Rodomonti (Ita)
Gomel 5-0 on agg

IBV Vestmannaeyjar (Ice) 1 (Thorvaldsson 3)
AIK Stockholm (Swe) 3 (Rubarth 9, Hoch 45, 66)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Wildhaber (Swi)
AIK 5-1 on agg

IFK Gothenburg (Swe) 2 (Rosenkvist 29, 39)
Zimbru Chisinau (Mol) 2 (Gvazava 34, Cebotari 36)
HT: 2-2. **Ref:** Meyer (Ger)
Sent off: Balasa (Zimbru) 8min
Zimbru 5-3 on agg

Ipswich Town (Eng) 8 (Miller 3, 19, Counago 18, 75, Ney og 21, Brown 42, McGreal 62, Ambrose 80)
Avenir Beggen (Lux) 1 (Molitor 56)
HT: 5-0. **Ref:** Skjerven (Nor)
Ipswich 9-1 on agg

Karnten (Aut) 4 (Ambrosius 11, 53, 72, Bubalo 62)
Metalurgs Liepaja (Lat) 2 (Katasonov 18, Ivanovs 83)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Szabo (Hun)
Karnten 6-2 on agg

Linfield (NI) 1 (Ferguson 44)
Stabaek (Nor) 1 (Gudmundsson 82)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Almeida Costa (Por)
Sent off: Flem 62min, Andresen 79min (both Stabaek); Ferguson (Linfield) 79min
Stabaek 5-1 on agg

Livingston (Sco) 0
Vaduz (Lie) 0
Ref: Novak (Cro)
Sent off: Telser (Vaduz) 74min
Agg 1-1. Livingston on away goals

Lokomotiv Tbilisi (Geo) 1 (Dzhanashiya 9)
FC Copenhagen (Den) 4 (Zuma 23, Pettersson 68, 72, Jonsson 80)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Douros (Gre)
FC Copenhagen 7-2 on agg

Lugano (Swi) 1 (Andreoli 55)
Ventspils (Lat) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Stanisic (Yug)
Ventspils 3-1 on agg

Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr) 2 (Pasins og 74, Prohorenkovs 84)
Levadia Tallinn (Est) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Kacenga (Slk)
Played in Sofia, Bulgaria
Maccabi 4-0 on agg

Matador Puchov (Slk) 2 (Breska 51, Strba 90)
Atyrau (Kaz) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Delevic (Yug)
Puchov 2-0 on agg

Midtjylland (Den) 3 (Pimpong 59, Kristensen 79, Jessen 115)
Pobeda Prilep (Mac) 0
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90min:** 2-0. **Ref:** Mendes Pratas (Por)
Sent off: Georgieski (Pobeda) 114min
Midtjylland 3-2 on agg

National Bucharest (Rom) 2 (Ilie 30, Radu 60)
SK Tirana (Alb) 2 (Merkoci 8, Zaccanti 68)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Peltola (Fin)
National 3-2 on agg

Nistru Otaci (Mol) 0
Aberdeen (Sco) 0
Ref: Culcu (Tur)
Aberdeen 1-0 on agg

OB Odense (Den) 2 (Miti 63, 90)
MyPa (Fin) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Bozinovski (Mac)
OB 2-1 on agg

Partizani (Alb) 1 (Brachini 35)
Hapoel Tel Aviv (Isr) 4 (Afek 28, Balili 73, 84, Udi 87)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Bossen (Hol)
Sent off: Brachini (Partizani) 76min
Hapoel 5-1 on agg

Polonia Warsaw (Pol) 2 (Bak 4, Bartczak 39)
Sliema Wanderers (Mlt) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Ivanov (Rus)
Polonia 5-1 on agg

Red Star Belgrade (Yug) 3 (Gvozdenovic 19, Pjanovic 44, Krivokapic 73)
Kairat Almaty (Kaz) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Ver Eecke (Blg)
Sent off: Aliyev (Kairat) 43min
Red Star 5-0 on agg

Sarajevo (Bos) 2 (Obuca 53, Osmanhodzic 78)
Sigma Olomouc (Cze) 1 (Putik 9)
Aet. **HT:** 0-1. **90mins:** 2-1. **Ref:** Tiumin (Rus)
Agg 3-3. Sarajevo 5-3 on pens

Sartid (Yug) 2 (Zecevic 14, Mirosavljevic 58)
Bangor City (Wal) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Stadsgaard (Den)
Sent off: Damnjanovic (Sartid) 60min
Sartid 2-1 on agg

Servette (Swi) 3 (Diogo 38, 43, Frei 77)
Spartak Yerevan (Arm) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Zammit (Mlt)
Servette 5-0 on agg

Siroki Brijeg (Bos) 3 (Erceg 13, M Hrgovic 49, 73)
Koba Senec (Slk) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ross (NI)
Siroki 5-1 on agg

Suduva (Lit) 3 (Radzinevicius 3, 30, 39)
Brann Bergen (Nor) 2 (Nhleko 16, 45)
HT: 3-2. **Ref:** Kos (Sln)
Suduva 6-4 on agg

Tallinna VMK (Est) 0
Dinamo Tbilisi (Geo) 1 (Akhalaia 74)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Berntsen (Nor)
Sent off: Mokolenko (TVMK) 71min
Dinamo 5-1 on agg

TNS Llansantfraid (Wal) 2 (Anthrobus 20, Toner 29)
Amica Wronki (Pol) 7 (Krol 26, 71, 86, Burkhardt 34, 75, Sobocinski 66, Ludzinski 89)
HT: 2-2. **Ref:** Loizou (Cyp)
Amica 12-2 on agg

Ujpest (Hun) 1 (Horvath 37)
Kl Klaksvik (Far) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Miezelis (Lit)
Ujpest 3-2 on agg

Viktoria Zizkov (Cze) 3 (Chihuri 2, Janousek 43, Kroty 69)
Domagnano (SaM) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Bergmann (Ice)
Zizkov 5-0 on agg

Wisla Krakow (Pol) 4 (Kuzba 19, 59, Uche 74, 80)
Glentoran (NI) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ishchenko (Ukr)
Wisla 6-0 on agg

Zenit St Petersburg (Rus) 8 (Ossipov 14, 69, Randjelovic 21, 71, 73, Spivak 57, Miceika 86, Nikolaev 89)
Encamp (And) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Theodotou (Cyp)
Zenit 13-0 on agg

Zvartnots (Arm) 2 (Nazaryan pen 53, Avanesyan 78)
Primorje (Sln) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Bede (Hun)
Primorje 6-3 on agg

INTERTOTO CUP

Finals, 2nd legs

Aug 27: Fulham (Eng) 3 (Inamoto 12, 47, 50)
Bologna (Ita) 1 (Locatelli 34) *Fulham 5-3 on agg;*
Malaga (Spa) 1 (Roteta 32) Villarreal (Spa) 1 (Aranda 65) *Malaga 2-1 on agg;*
Stuttgart (Ger) 2 (Balakov 81, Benoit Cheyrou og 88)
Lille (Fra) 0 *Stuttgart 2-1 on agg.*

Winners enter UEFA Cup at 1st round stage

AUSTRIA

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria Wien	8	6	2	0	19	3	20
Pasching	8	6	1	1	12	2	19
Rapid Wien	8	4	3	1	14	6	15
Sturm Graz	8	4	0	4	12	12	12
SV Ried	8	3	1	4	7	10	10
Karnten	8	2	3	3	9	10	9
Bregenz	8	1	4	3	8	13	7
Admira	8	2	1	5	5	16	7
Grazer AK	8	1	3	4	6	12	6
Salzburg	8	1	2	5	5	13	5

Table as at Sep 1

BELGIUM

Saturday, August 17

Anderlecht 4 (Mornar 16, De Bilde 20, Seol 41, 57)
Mechelen 1 (Viscaal 28) Att: 24,278

Club Brugge 3 (Mendoza 17, Englebert 34, Maertens pen 70)
Beveren 0 Att: 18,170

Lierse 1 (Frigard 55)
La Louviere 1 (Tilmant 90) Att: 7,000

Lokeren 3 (Kristinsson 10, Gretarsson pen 35, Bangoura 74)
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Kpaka 85) Att: 4,625

Mons 2 (Joly 50, 66)
Westerlo 1 (Brogno 75) Att: 5,000

Royal Antwerp 2 (Mussa 51, Goots pen 75)
Genk 4 (Dagano 6, Thijs 14, 72 Daerden 52) Att: 9,000

St Truiden 0
Lommel 0 Att: 7,000

Sunday, August 18

Charleroi 3 (Eduardo 14, Kolotilko 41, Yazdani 65)
Standard 3 (Lukunku 3, 49, Turaci 46) Att: 11,262

Mouscron 2 (Marcin Zewlakow 61, Martic 72)
Gent 1 (Hosny 75) Att: 8,000

Saturday, August 24

Gent 2 (Machete 77, Dimbala 85)
Charleroi 1 (Eduardo 40) Att: 7,513

Lierse 2 (Huysegems 24, Mitu 90)
Beveren 0 Att: 6,500

Lommel 2 (Dekelver 19, Waligora 86)
Lokeren 0 Att: 5,500

Mechelen 0
Mons 0 Att: 5,800

Royal Antwerp 3 (Goots 27, 37, Yattara 42)
Mouscron 1 (Dugardein 87) Att: 5,000

Standard 0
Anderlecht 2 (Seol 49, Zane 90) Att: 19,755

Westerlo 0
Club Brugge 2 (Englebert 6, Lange 53) Att: 8,000

Sunday, August 25

La Louviere 1 (Ishiaku 89)
St Truiden 2 (Caers 34, Pereira 40) Att: 4,500

Saturday, August 31

Anderlecht 2 (Seol 22, 44)
Gent 2 (Kaklamanos 8, Vanic pen 51) Att: 24,892

Charleroi 1 (Emamifar 79)
Royal Antwerp 1 (Goots 42) Att: 7,146

Club Brugge 4 (Simons pen 14, Mendoza 40, Stoica 82, Smolders 88)
Mechelen 0 Att: 18,561

Germinal Beerschot 3 (Kpaka 39, Snelders 70, Quansah 85)
Lommel 0 Att: 7,000

Lierse 0
Westerlo 1 (Vlaminck 81) Att: 7,000

Lokeren 1 (Kimoto 80)
La Louviere 1 (Kenmogne 12) Att: 3,676

Mons 1 (Roussel 80)
Standard 0 Att: 8,000

St Truiden 6 (Van Geel 22, Vrancken 29, Boffin pen 36, pen 61, 69, Mbonabucya 63)
Beveren 1 (Ne 88) Att: 6,000

Sunday, September 1

Mouscron 3 (Dugardein 56, Claeys 89, De Vleeschauwer 90)
Genk 3 (Daerden 40, Dagano 52, Sonck 60) Att: 10,000

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Club Brugge	4	4	0	0	11	1	12
Anderlecht	4	3	1	0	10	3	10
St Truiden	4	2	1	1	10	5	7
Mouscron	4	2	1	1	9	7	7
Lierse	4	2	1	1	5	3	7
Lokeren	4	2	1	1	7	6	7
Mons	4	2	1	1	3	4	7
Germinal B	3	2	0	1	7	5	6
Royal Antwerp	4	1	2	1	6	6	5
Gent	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
Genk	3	1	1	1	9	8	4
Lommel	4	1	1	2	3	5	4
Mechelen	4	1	1	2	2	8	4
Westerlo	4	1	0	3	2	6	3
Beveren	4	1	0	3	4	11	3
Charleroi	4	0	2	2	5	7	2
La Louviere	4	0	2	2	4	6	2
Standard	4	0	1	3	3	9	1

LEADING GOALSCORER
6 Seol Ki-hyeun (Anderlecht)

BULGARIA

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	4	4	0	0	8	1	12
Levski	4	3	1	0	11	4	10
Slavia	4	3	0	1	12	7	9
Naftex	4	3	0	1	7	5	9
Lovech	4	2	2	0	5	2	8
Spartak Varna	4	2	0	2	7	5	6
Chernomorets	4	2	0	2	6	6	6
Lok Plovdiv	4	2	0	2	4	4	6
Cherno More	4	1	2	1	2	2	5
Marek	4	1	1	2	6	6	4
Lok Sofia	4	1	1	2	3	5	4
Rilski Sportist	4	0	1	3	4	10	1
Dobrudzha	4	0	0	4	3	9	0
Botev	4	0	0	4	2	14	0

Table as at Sep 1

CROATIA

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cibalia	6	4	2	0	12	5	14
Dinamo	6	4	1	1	13	6	13
Hajduk	6	4	1	1	6	5	13
Varteks	6	4	0	2	10	4	12
Rijeka	6	3	0	3	13	9	9
Slaven	6	3	0	3	8	8	9
Zagreb	6	2	2	2	7	7	8
Kamen Ingrad	6	1	4	1	4	6	7
Osijek	6	1	2	3	6	12	5
Sibenik	6	1	1	4	6	12	4
Pomorac	6	0	3	3	8	12	3
Zadar	6	0	2	4	4	11	2

Table as at Sep 1

CZECH REPUBLIC

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sparta	5	5	0	0	12	2	15
Liberec	5	4	1	0	6	1	13
Jablonec	5	3	2	0	6	3	11
Slavia	5	3	1	1	14	6	10
Zizkov	5	2	2	1	8	7	8
Chmel Blsany	5	2	2	1	4	3	8
Ostrava	5	2	1	2	8	7	7
Brno	5	2	1	2	6	6	7
Olomouc	5	1	3	1	5	5	6
Ceske Budejovice	5	2	0	3	7	10	6
Pribram	5	1	1	3	3	5	4
Synot	5	1	1	3	4	8	4
Hradec Kralove	5	0	3	2	5	7	3
Zlin	5	0	3	2	4	9	3
Teplice	5	1	0	4	5	12	3
Bohemians	5	0	1	4	6	12	1

Table as at Sep 2

DENMARK

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
OB	7	4	1	2	16	8	13
AaB	7	4	1	2	11	9	13
Esbjerg	7	3	2	2	17	14	11
Midtjylland	7	3	2	2	12	10	11
FC Copenhagen	7	3	2	2	11	13	11
AGF	7	2	3	2	11	11	9
Farum	7	3	0	4	10	13	9
Brondby	7	2	2	3	13	11	8
Silkeborg	7	2	2	3	8	9	8
AB	7	2	2	3	10	12	8
Viborg	7	1	4	2	10	14	7
Koge	7	2	1	4	12	17	7

Table as at Sep 8

ENGLAND

Saturday, August 17

Blackburn 0
Sunderland 0 Att: 27,122

Charlton 2 (Konchesky 7, Rufus 33)
Chelsea 3 (Zola 43, Cole 84, Lampard 89) Att: 25,640

Everton 2 (Pembridge 37, Radzinski 81)
Tottenham 2 (Etherington 63, Ferdinand 74) Att: 40,120

Fulham 4 (Saha pen 11, Legwinski 33, 79, Marlet pen 38)
Bolton 1 (Ricketts pen 4) Att: 16,333

Leeds 3 (Barmby 15, Viduka 45, Keane 80)
Manchester City 0 Att: 40,195

Manchester Utd 1 (Solskjaer 78)
West Brom 0 Att: 67,645

Southampton 0
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 28,341

Sunday, August 18

Arsenal 2 (Henry 10, Wiltord 24)
Birmingham 0 Att: 38,018

Aston Villa 0
Liverpool 1 (Riise 47) Att: 41,183

Monday, August 19

Newcastle 4 (Lua Lua 61, 72, Shearer 76, Solano 86)
West Ham 0 Att: 51,072

Friday, August 23

Chelsea 2 (Gallas 4, Zenden 45)
Manchester Utd 2 (Beckham 26, Giggs 66) Att: 41,541

Saturday, August 24

Birmingham 0
Blackburn 1 (Yorke 13) Att: 28,563

Bolton 1 (Djorkaeff 2)
Charlton 2 (Bart-Williams pen 26, Euell 71) Att: 21,753

Liverpool 3 (Diouf 3, 51, Murphy pen 90)
Southampton 0 Att: 43,058

Manchester City 1 (Huckerby 36)
Newcastle 0 Att: 34,776

Middlesbrough 2 (Maccarone 32, 51)
Fulham 2 (Davis 89, Sava 90) Att: 28,588

Sunderland 0
Everton 1 (Campbell 28) Att: 37,698

Tottenham 1 (Redknapp 26)
Aston Villa 0 Att: 35,384

West Brom 1 (Marshall 90)
Leeds 3 (Kewell 39, Bowyer 52, Viduka 70) Att: 26,618

West Ham 2 (Cole 44, Kanoute 53)
Arsenal 2 (Henry 65, Wiltord 88) Att: 35,048

Tuesday, August 27

Arsenal 5 (Cole 3, Lauren 21, Wiltord 24, 77, Aliadiere 90)
West Brom 2 (Dobie 51, Roberts 87) Att: 37,920

Charlton 0
Tottenham 1 (Davies 8) Att: 26,461

Wednesday, August 28

Aston Villa 1 (Vassell 64)
Manchester City 0 Att: 33,494

Blackburn 2 (Dunn 16, Grabbi 83)
Liverpool 2 (Murphy 31, Riise 77) Att: 29,207

Everton 1 (Unsworth 90)
Birmingham 1 (John pen 49) Att: 37,197

Leeds 0
Sunderland 1 (McAteer 45) Att: 39,929

Southampton 1 (Fernandes 51)
Chelsea 1 (Lampard 80) Att: 31,208

Saturday, August 31

Birmingham 2 (Devlin 32, Johnson 58)
Leeds 1 (Bowyer 50) Att: 27,164

Manchester City 3 (Anelka 14, 16, 85)
Everton 1 (Unsworth pen 28) Att: 34,835

Middlesbrough 1 (Job 90)
Blackburn 0 Att: 28,270

Sunderland 1 (Flo 71)
Manchester Utd 1 (Giggs 7) Att: 47,586

Tottenham 2 (Ferdinand 10, Sheringham pen 89)
Southampton 1 (Taricco og 30) Att: 35,573

West Brom 1 (Moore 48)
Fulham 0 Att: 25,461

West Ham 0
Charlton 2 (Jensen 4, Fortune 44) Att: 32,424

Sunday, September 1

Bolton 1 (Ricketts pen 56)
Aston Villa 0 Att: 22,500

Chelsea 1 (Zola 34)
Arsenal 1 (Toure 60) Att: 40,037

Monday, September 2

Liverpool 2 (Hamann 53, Owen pen 73)
Newcastle 2 (Speed 80, Shearer 88) Att: 43,241

Tuesday, September 3

Manchester Utd 1 (Van Nistelrooy pen 28)
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 67,464

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tottenham	4	3	1	0	6	3	10
Arsenal	4	2	2	0	10	5	8
Liverpool	4	2	2	0	8	4	8
Manchester Utd	4	2	2	0	5	3	8
Leeds	4	2	0	2	7	4	6
Chelsea	4	1	3	0	7	6	6
Charlton	4	2	0	2	6	5	6
Manchester City	4	2	0	2	4	5	6
Middlesbrough	4	1	2	1	3	3	5
Blackburn	4	1	2	1	3	3	5
Sunderland	4	1	2	1	2	2	5
Everton	4	1	2	1	5	6	5
Newcastle	3	1	1	1	6	3	4
Fulham	3	1	1	1	6	4	4
Birmingham	4	1	1	2	3	5	4
Aston Villa	4	1	0	3	1	3	3
Bolton	3	1	0	2	3	6	3
West Brom	4	1	0	3	4	9	3
Southampton	4	0	2	2	2	6	2
West Ham	3	0	1	2	2	8	1

LEADING GOALSCORER
4 Sylvain Wiltord (Arsenal)

FRANCE

Friday, August 16

Marseille 1 (Bakayoko 30)
Lyon 1 (Govou 14) Att: 58,500

Saturday, August 17

Bastia 1 (Prince Daye 68)
Monaco 0 Att: 10,055

Guingamp 3 (Malouda 34, 90, Le Roux 67)
Rennes 0 Att: 17,522

Lille 0
Nice 3 (Cobos 18, Varrault 40, Bigne 72) Att: 14,721

Montpellier 0
Bordeaux 1 (Smertin 20) Att: 16,981

Paris SG 2 (Cardetti 44, Aloisio 45)
Ajaccio 2 (Granon 70, Alicarte 90) Att: 35,539

Sedan 0
Lens 1 (Song 44) Att: 14,000

Sochaux 4 (Pedretti pen 4, 77, Pagis 85, Oruma 89)
Nantes 2 (Moldovan 20, Djemba-Djemba 63) Att: 14,433

Strasbourg 1 (Martins 40)
Le Havre 1 (Sinama-Pongolle pen 43) Att: 9,868

Troyes 1 (Gousse 5)
Auxerre 2 (Boumsong 66, Cisse 84) Att: 12,907

Friday, August 23

Lille 0
Troyes 0 Att: 14,088

Saturday, August 24

Ajaccio 1 (Guglielmone 26)
Sedan 0 Att: 9,000

Auxerre 2 (Kapo 32, Cisse 75)
Guingamp 1 (Carnot 51) Att: 12,000

Bordeaux 1 (Pauleta 61)
Strasbourg 2 (Bertin pen 5, Ljuboja 72) Att: 23,000

Lyon 4 (Anderson 17, 32, 62, Carriere 88)
Bastia 1 (Ahamada 23) Att: 38,777

Monaco 1 (Rothen 41)
Sochaux 0 Att: 7,000

Nantes 2 (Yepes 5, Da Rocha 27)
Lens 2 (Utaka 62, Diop 72) Att: 35,000

Nice 2 (Diawara 45, Roy 64)
Montpellier 1 (Mezague 40) Att: 11,422

Rennes 1 (Piquionne 10)
Marseille 3 (Chapuis 13, 70, Sakho 90) Att: 23,205

Sunday, August 25

Le Havre 0
Paris SG 1 (Aloisio 90) Att: 15,652

Saturday, August 31

Bastia 3 (Gourvennec 13, Ahamada 22, Maurice 71)
Rennes 1 (Piquionne 17) Att: 6,758

Guingamp 0
Bordeaux 0 Att: 15,369

Lens 1 (Diop pen 38)
Monaco 0 Att: 37,307

Montpellier 0
Le Havre 0 Att: 8,550

Paris SG 1 (Cardetti 74)
Nice 1 (Everson 62) Att: 41,336

Sedan 1 (Noro 27)
Nantes 0 Att: 13,500

Sochaux 2 (Monsoreau 70, Pagis 85)
Lyon 1 (Saveljic og 87) Att: 18,442

Strasbourg 2 (Le Pen 35, Martins 52)
Lille 2 (Delpierre 51, Tapia 84) Att: 14,308

Troyes 1 (Niang 5)
Ajaccio 0 Att: 10,673

Sunday, September 1

Marseille 0
Auxerre 0 Att: 54,000

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nice	5	3	1	1	11	4	10
Auxerre	5	3	1	1	6	3	10
Lens	5	2	3	0	6	4	9
Paris SG	5	2	3	0	5	3	9
Lyon	5	2	2	1	15	8	8
Guingamp	5	2	2	1	9	5	8
Bordeaux	5	2	2	1	5	2	8
Sochaux	5	2	2	1	7	5	8
Marseille	5	2	2	1	5	4	8
Nantes	5	2	1	2	7	7	7
Bastia	5	2	1	2	6	7	7
Monaco	5	2	0	3	5	3	6
Le Havre	5	1	3	1	3	3	6
Strasbourg	5	1	3	1	6	9	6
Ajaccio	5	1	2	2	4	6	5
Troyes	5	1	2	2	2	6	5
Montpellier	5	1	1	3	2	5	4
Sedan	5	1	1	3	2	8	4
Lille	5	0	3	2	2	8	3
Rennes	5	0	1	4	2	10	1

LEADING GOALSCORER
6 Sonny Anderson (Lyon)

GERMANY

Saturday, August 17

Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Placente 23)
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Koller 61) Att: 22,500

Bayern Munich 6 (Elber 18, 41, 65, 84, Ballack 26, Pizarro 81)
Arminia Bielefeld 2 (Wichniarek 51, Diabang 89) Att: 50,000

Bochum 5 (Christiansen 26, 35, 84, Freier 33, Hashemian 64)
Energie Cottbus 0 Att: 22,201

Hannover 1 (Stajner 27)
1860 Munich 3 (Borimirov 5, Max 41, Lauth 90) Att: 42,132

Hansa Rostock 2 (Rydlewicz 37, 82)
Nurnberg 0 Att: 19,500

Hertha 1 (Friedrich 85)
Stuttgart 1 (Dundee 14) Att: 49,202

Kaiserslautern 1 (Riedl 34)
Schalke 3 (Bohme pen 48, Agali 56, Sand 90) Att: 39,300

Sunday, August 18

Werder Bremen 2 (Haristeas 9, Wehlage 50)
Hamburg 1 (Ujfalusi 20) Att: 35,000

Wolfsburg 1 (Petrov 67)
Monchengladbach 0 Att: 16,099

Saturday, August 24

Arminia Bielefeld 1 (Brinkmann 43)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 20,369

Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Simak 10, Franca 75)
Bochum 4 (Gudjonsson 13, Wosz 33, Fahrenhorst 43, Christiansen 60) Att: 22,500

Borussia Dortmund 3 (Koller 38, Dede 66, Ewerthon 87)
Stuttgart 1 (Dundee pen 77) Att: 66,000

Energie Cottbus 0
Hansa Rostock 4 (Rydlewicz 17, 64, Prica 27, Wibran 47) Att: 14,076

Hamburg 0
Bayern Munich 3 (Pizarro 25, 85, Zickler 90) Att: 55,516

Monchengladbach 3 (Van Hout 23, 47, Munch 36)
Kaiserslautern 0 Att: 27,100

1860 Munich 3 (Schroth 33, Cerny 63, Max 66)
Werder Bremen 0 Att: 24,000

Sunday, August 25

Nurnberg 3 (Ciric pen 16, 36, Cacau 49)
Hannover 1 (N'Diaye pen 83) Att: 25,800

Schalke 0
Hertha 0 Att: 60,601

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bochum	3	3	0	0	12	3	9
Hansa Rostock	3	3	0	0	8	0	9
Bayern Munich	3	2	1	0	9	2	7
Schalke	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
1860 Munich	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
Arminia Bielefeld	3	2	0	1	6	6	6
B Dortmund	3	1	2	0	6	4	5
Monchengladbach	3	1	1	1	3	1	4
Hertha	3	0	3	0	3	3	3
Wolfsburg	3	1	0	2	1	2	3
Nurnberg	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Hamburg	3	1	0	2	3	6	3
Werder Bremen	3	1	0	2	2	7	3
B Leverkusen	3	0	2	1	4	6	2
Stuttgart	3	0	2	1	3	5	2
Kaiserslautern	3	0	1	2	2	7	1
Energie Cottbus	3	0	1	2	1	10	1
Hannover	3	0	0	3	3	8	0

LEADING GOALSCORER
6 Thomas Christiansen (Bochum)

GREECE

Aug 24: Panahaiki 0 Aris 1; Aigaleo 1 AEK 1.
Aug 25: Iraklis 3 OFI 0; Panionios 2 Ionikos 0; Akratitos 0 Xanthi 1; Proodeftiki 1 Giannina 0; Olympiakos 1 Kallithea 0; PAOK 4 Panathinaikos 1.
Aug 31: Aris 1 Panionios 0.
Sep 1: Panahaiki 0 Iraklis 2; OFI 0 Olympiakos 1; Kallithea 0 Akratitos 2; Xanthi 1 PAOK 1; AEK 3 Giannina 1; Panathinaikos 0 Proodeftiki 1; Ionikos 0 Aigaleo 0.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iraklis	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Aris	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Olympiakos	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Proodeftiki	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
PAOK	2	1	1	0	5	2	4
AEK	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
Xanthi	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Akratitos	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Panionios	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Aigaleo	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Ionikos	2	0	1	1	0	2	1
Giannina	2	0	0	2	1	4	0
Kallithea	2	0	0	2	0	3	0
Panahaiki	2	0	0	2	0	3	0
Panathinaikos	2	0	0	2	1	5	0
OFI	2	0	0	2	0	4	0

HOLLAND

Friday, August 16

RBC 1 (Maseland 9)
Zwolle 1 (Lim-Duan 73) Att: 4,750

Saturday, August 17

AZ 3 (Van Galen 27, El Khattabi 49, Perez 70)
Heerenveen 3 (Denneboom 13, 55, Venema 29) Att: 7,250

Excelsior 0
PSV 2 (Van Bommel 3, Bruggink 17) Att: 3,400

NAC 2 (Slot 24, Feher 51)
Roda JC 2 (Nygaard 57, Van Dessel 85) Att: 13,104

Twente 0
Willem II 2 (Sektioui 61, Shoukov 69) Att: 13,200

Sunday, August 18

Ajax 3 (Galasek 5, Hossam 79, Pienaar 85)
Utrecht 1 (Chivu og 31) Att: 34,434

Feyenoord 2 (Kalou 77, Emerton 81)
NEC 0 Att: 40,000

Groningen 1 (Drent 23)
Vitesse 2 (Amoah 24, 68) Att: 11,558

RKC 4 (Hoogendorp 25, 61, Oost 63, Cornelisse 68)
De Graafschap 2 (Van Leerdam 48, Van de Haar 70) Att: 5,500

Friday, August 23

NEC 2 (Hesp pen 3, De Nooijer 80)
AZ 0 Att: 11,000

Saturday, August 24

De Graafschap 2 (Van Vossen 22, Valeev 72)
RBC 0 Att: 11,000

Heerenveen 1 (De Nooijer 11)
RKC 2 (Cornelisse 60, Hoogendorp 69) Att: 14,200

PSV 1 (Vogel 82)
Groningen 0 Att: 30,500

Roda JC 2 (Soetaers 37, 87)
Feyenoord 2 (Paauwe 13, Van Hooijdonk 82) Att: 14,000

Zwolle 1 (R Roelofsen 9)
Excelsior 1 (Boutahar 90) Att: 5,850

Sunday, August 25

Twente 1 (Houwing 20)
Utrecht 1 (Kuijt 27) Att: 13,300

Vitesse 1 (Amoah 16)
Ajax 2 (Pasanen 51, Chivu 77) Att: 24,200

Willem II 1 (Mghizrat 38)
NAC 1 (Van den Eede 23) Att: 13,190

Friday, August 30

RKC 3 (Hoogendorp 41, 78, Putter 88)
Twente 2 (Cairo 43, Cavens 84) Att: 6,300

Saturday, August 31

NAC 0
NEC 0 Att: 13,440

Roda JC 1 (Anastasiou 88)
Willem II 0 Att: 13,000

Zwolle 1 (R Roelofsen 58)
Vitesse 0 Att: 5,450

Sunday, September 1

Groningen 1 (Hugo 75)
Ajax 3 (Van der Vaart 14, 40, Van der Meyde 48) Att: 12,400

RBC 3 (Vos 2, Wooter 38, Sillah 66)
Heerenveen 0 Att: 5,000

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax	3	3	0	0	8	3	9
RKC	3	3	0	0	9	5	9
PSV	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Roda JC	3	1	2	0	5	4	5
Zwolle	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Feyenoord	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
RBC	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Willem II	3	1	1	1	3	2	4
NEC	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
De Graafschap	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
NAC	3	0	3	0	3	3	3
Vitesse	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
AZ	2	0	1	1	3	5	1
Utrecht	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
Excelsior	2	0	1	1	1	3	1
Twente	3	0	1	2	3	6	1
Heerenveen	3	0	1	2	4	8	1
Groningen	3	0	0	3	2	6	0

LEADING GOALSCORER
5 Rick Hoogendorp (RKC)

HUNGARY

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
MTK	6	5	0	1	13	6	15
Ferencvaros	6	4	1	1	12	3	13
Gyor	6	4	1	1	11	6	13
Siofok	6	4	1	1	11	6	13
Ujpest	6	3	1	2	13	10	10
Debrecen	6	3	1	2	13	14	10
Videoton	6	1	3	2	7	8	6
Dunaferr	6	1	2	3	11	13	5
Bekescsaba	5	1	0	4	7	12	3
Kispest-Honved	6	0	3	3	5	14	3
Zalaegerszeg	4	0	2	2	6	11	2
Matav	5	0	1	4	3	9	1

Table as at Sep 1

ITALY

SUPER CUP

Aug 25 - Tripoli, Libya
Juventus 2 (Del Piero 38, 73)
Parma 1 (Di Vaio 64)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Farina

NORWAY

NORWAY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosenborg	21	14	3	4	44	25	45
Lyn	21	13	3	5	29	22	42
Molde	21	12	4	5	35	19	40
Viking	21	9	9	3	38	24	36
Stabaek	21	10	5	6	35	25	35
Odd Grenland	21	10	3	8	30	26	33
Valerenga	21	6	9	6	30	24	27
Sogndal	21	8	2	11	29	40	26
Bodo/Glimt	21	7	4	10	32	32	25
Bryne	21	7	4	10	33	35	25
Lillestrom	21	6	5	10	26	28	23
Brann	20	6	3	11	26	38	21
Moss	21	4	5	12	22	38	17
Start	20	2	5	13	19	52	11

Table as at Sep 2

POLAND

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Odra	5	3	2	0	7	4	11
Katowice	5	3	1	1	7	3	10
Legia	5	2	3	0	10	8	9
Groclin	5	2	3	0	9	7	9
Wisla K	5	2	2	1	13	8	8
Gornik	5	2	2	1	10	8	8
Amica	5	2	2	1	5	4	8
Polonia	5	2	1	2	8	7	7
KSZO	5	2	1	2	5	5	7
Ruch C	5	1	3	1	6	7	6
Lech	5	1	2	2	5	5	5
Widzew	5	1	2	2	6	7	5
Wisla P	5	1	2	2	7	9	5
Garbarnia	5	1	1	3	7	12	4
Zaglebie	5	1	0	4	8	9	3
Pogon	5	0	1	4	2	12	1

Table as at Sep 3

PORTUGAL

Thursday, August 22

Setubal 1 (Hugo Henrique pen 42)
Boavista 1 (Luiz Claudio 31)

Friday, August 23

Academica 0
Sporting Lisbon 2 (Ricardo Quaresma 43, Tonel og 64)

Saturday, August 24

Benfica 3 (Zahovic 35, Tiago 43, Simao pen 80)
Maritimo 0

Santa Clara 0
Sporting Braga 0

Uniao Leiria 1 (Kibuey 81)
Guimaraes 2 (Ricardo Silva 8, Bessa 54)

Sunday, August 25

Moreirense 1 (Jose Duarte 70)
Beira Mar 2 (Zezinho pen 80, Fary 88)

Nacional 0
Gil Vicente 1 (Manoel 49)

Pacos Ferreira 3 (Paulo Sousa 11, Pedrinha 21, Ze Nando 83)
Varzim 1 (Pepa 90)

FC Porto 2 (Helder Postiga 66, Jankauskas 90)
Belenenses 2 (Neca 12, pen 88)

Friday, August 30

Sporting Braga 1 (Castanheira 18)
Pacos Ferreira 0

Saturday, August 31

Beira Mar 0
Benfica 2 (Argel 8, Simao 90)

Belenenses 2 (Neca 25, Marco Paulo 90)
Academica 0

Guimaraes 3 (Pedro Mendes 17, Romeu 72, 81)
Nacional 2 (Adriano 33, Serginho 66)

Sunday, September 1

Gil Vicente 0
Setubal 1 (Jorginho 49)

Maritimo 2 (Eric Gaucho 11, Jacques 51)
Uniao Leiria 0

Sporting Lisbon 2 (Beto 43, Pedro Barbosa pen 61)
Santa Clara 1 (Joao Pedro pen 52)

Varzim 1 (Pepa 51)
Moreirense 0

Monday, September 2

Boavista 0
FC Porto 1 (Costinha 47)

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Benfica	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Sporting Lisbon	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Guimaraes	2	2	0	0	5	3	6
Belenenses	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
FC Porto	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Setubal	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Sporting Braga	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Pacos Ferreira	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Gil Vicente	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Beira Mar	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Maritimo	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Varzim	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Boavista	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Santa Clara	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Nacional	2	0	0	2	2	4	0
Moreirense	2	0	0	2	1	3	0
Uniao Leiria	2	0	0	2	1	4	0
Academica	2	0	0	2	0	4	0

LEADING GOALSCORER
3 Neca (Belenenses)

SUPER CUP

Aug 18 - Setubal
Sporting Lisbon 5 (Ricardo Fernandes 31, 82, Niculae 46, Kutuzov 54, Carlos Martins 86)
Leixoes 1 (Antchouet 90)
HT: 1-0

ROMANIA

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U Craiova	3	3	0	0	9	4	9
Poli AEK	3	3	0	0	4	0	9
National	3	2	0	1	7	4	6
Rapid	3	2	0	1	7	5	6
Otelul	3	2	0	1	5	5	6
Brasov	3	1	2	0	2	0	5
Dinamo	3	1	1	1	8	5	4
Gloria	3	1	1	1	3	1	4
Ceahlaul	3	1	1	1	8	7	4
Astra	3	1	1	1	7	7	4
Farul	3	1	1	1	2	4	4
Sportul	3	1	0	2	3	6	3
Bacau	3	0	1	2	3	6	1
Steaua	3	0	1	2	1	4	1
Arges	3	0	1	2	0	3	1
UTA	3	0	0	3	1	9	0

Table as at Sep 1

RUSSIA

Aug 16: Spartak 2 Alaniya 1.
Aug 17: Rostselmash 0 Kryliya Sovetov 3; Anzhi 0 Torpedo M 1; Rotor 0 CSKA 1; Saturn 5 Uralan 2.
Aug 18: Torpedo-ZIL 2 Sokol 0; Shinnik 0 Lokomotiv M 0.
Aug 19: Zenit 1 Dinamo 2.
Aug 24: Lokomotiv M 3 Rostselmash 0; Kryliya Sovetov 4 Shinnik 1; Torpedo M 3 Rotor 1; Alaniya 0 Saturn 1; Sokol 2 Zenit 2; Dinamo 1 Torpedo-ZIL 1.
Aug 25: CSKA 3 Anzhi 1; Uralan 1 Spartak 1.
Aug 31: Spartak 0 Saturn 2; Dinamo 2 Sokol 1.
Sep 1: Lokomotiv M 2 Kryliya Sovetov 0; Rostselmash 1 Shinnik 1; Anzhi 2 Rotor 1; CSKA 2 Torpedo M 3; Uralan 2 Alaniya 0; Zenit 0 Torpedo-ZIL 0.

RUSSIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lokomotiv M	23	15	7	1	33	8	52
Spartak	24	14	5	5	40	30	47
CSKA	22	14	3	5	43	21	45
Saturn	22	11	6	5	32	24	39
Kryliya Sovetov	22	11	3	8	32	26	36
Dinamo	22	10	3	9	27	21	33
Torpedo M	22	9	5	8	32	26	32
Shinnik	23	8	7	8	30	31	31
Zenit	22	8	6	8	29	28	30
Uralan	23	5	10	8	30	35	25
Rotor	22	7	4	11	17	23	25
Alaniya	22	6	4	12	26	34	22
Torpedo-ZIL	22	4	9	9	16	28	21
Anzhi	23	4	8	11	18	36	20
Rostselmash	22	5	5	12	21	42	20
Sokol	22	2	7	13	17	30	13

SCOTLAND

Saturday, August 17

Celtic 5 (McNamara 25, Sutton 26, Petrov 33, Hartson 78, Larsson 80)
Dundee Utd 0 Att: 56,907

Dunfermline 4 (Crawford 34, 80, 85, Brewster 69)
Dundee 2 (Novo 22, 58) Att: 5,901

Kilmarnock 0
Motherwell 3 (Ramsay 67, Pearson 84, McFadden 86) Att: 6,164

Partick 2 (Mitchell 33, pen 64)
Livingston 2 (Rubio 31, 76) Att: 4,255

Sunday, August 18

Aberdeen 1 (D'Jaffo 73)
Hearts 1 (De Vries 79) Att: 12,825

Hibernian 2 (Townsley 35, O'Connor 89)
Rangers 4 (De Boer 6, Ferguson pen 45, Lovenkrands 65, 87) Att: 11,633

Saturday, August 24

Dundee 2 (Caballero 79, Lovell 90)
Hibernian 1 (O'Connor 10) Att: 6,411

Hearts 2 (Weir 53, De Vries 57)
Dunfermline 0 Att: 11,367

Partick 0
Celtic 1 (Larsson 72) Att: 8,053

Sunday, August 25

Dundee Utd 1 (McIntyre 46)
Motherwell 1 (Pearson 3) Att: 5,795

Livingston 0
Kilmarnock 1 (Boyd 42) Att: 7,416

Rangers 2 (De Boer 30, Ferguson pen 78)
Aberdeen 0 Att: 49,219

Saturday, August 31

Dundee Utd 0
Dundee 0 Att: 12,402

Hearts 1 (McMullan 31)
Kilmarnock 1 (Boyd 45) Att: 11,912

Motherwell 0
Hibernian 2 (Townsley 15, 72) Att: 5,888

Sunday, September 1

Aberdeen 0
Partick 1 (Lilley 30) Att: 12,591

Celtic 2 (Larsson 26, Balde 38)
Livingston 0 Att: 56,988

Dunfermline 0
Rangers 6 (Caniggia 11, 59, 68, Arteta 28, Ricksen 42, Ferguson pen 56) Att: 8,948

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	5	5	0	0	14	1	15
Rangers	5	4	1	0	16	3	13
Hearts	5	2	3	0	10	4	9
Kilmarnock	5	2	2	1	5	6	8
Partick	5	1	3	1	4	4	6
Dunfermline	5	2	0	3	7	13	6
Motherwell	5	1	2	2	7	7	5
Dundee	5	1	2	2	5	9	5
Livingston	5	1	1	3	6	9	4
Aberdeen	5	1	1	3	3	9	4
Hibernian	5	1	0	4	7	13	3
Dundee Utd	5	0	3	2	2	8	3

LEADING GOALSCORER
6 Mark De Vries (Hearts)

SPAIN

Saturday, August 31

Racing Santander 0
Valladolid 1 (Aganzo 90) Att: 14,725

Sunday, September 1

Barcelona 2 (Luis Enrique 4, 55)
Atletico Madrid 2 (Otero 45, Correa 86) Att: 85,000

Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Makaay 31, Diego Tristan pen 75)
Betis 4 (Marcos Assuncao 19, Alfonso pen 23, Arzu 39, Joaquin 52) Att: 32,000

Mallorca 0
Valencia 2 (De los Santos 10, Baraja 57) Att: 20,000

Rayo Vallecano 2 (Julio Alvarez 22, pen 64)
Alaves 2 (Ivan Alonso 38, Magno 72) Att: 12,500

Real Sociedad 4 (Karpin 28, Nihat 33, 63, Kovacevic 77)
Athletic Bilbao 2 (Gurpegi 29, 75) Att: 30,000

Recreativo 2 (Raul Molina 17, Viqueira 34)
Malaga 3 (Musampa 37, 48, 57) Att: 20,000

Sevilla 0
Celta Vigo 1 (Gustavo Lopez 39) Att: 35,000

Villarreal 2 (Victor 10, 14)
Osasuna 2 (Antonio Lopez 67, Pablo Garcia 81) Att: 16,500

Monday, September 2

Real Madrid 2 (Ivan Helguera 34, McManaman 88)
Espanyol 0 Att: 72,485

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Betis	1	1	0	0	4	2	3
Real Sociedad	1	1	0	0	4	2	3
Real Madrid	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Valencia	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Malaga	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Celta Vigo	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Valladolid	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Alaves	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Atletico Madrid	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Barcelona	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Osasuna	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Rayo Vallecano	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Villarreal	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Recreativo	1	0	0	1	2	3	0
Racing Santander	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Sevilla	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Athletic Bilbao	1	0	0	1	2	4	0
Dep La Coruna	1	0	0	1	2	4	0
Espanyol	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Mallorca	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

LEADING GOALSCORER
3 Kiki Musampa (Malaga)

SUPER CUP

1st leg - Aug 18 - La Coruna
Deportivo La Coruna 3 (Valeron 12, Victor 21, Naybet 31)
Valencia 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez

2nd leg - Aug 25 - Valencia
Valencia 0
Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Victor 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 37,000. **Ref:** Iturralde Gonzalez
Sent off: Ayala (Valencia) 3min
Deportivo 4-0 on agg

SWEDEN

SWEDEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Malmo	18	11	2	5	40	24	35
Orgryte	18	8	8	2	33	24	32
Djurgardens	18	9	4	5	30	23	31
Landskrona	18	8	4	6	35	26	28
Helsingborgs	18	7	5	6	28	28	26
Orebro	18	7	5	6	22	26	26
AIK	18	5	8	5	25	26	23
Sundsvall	18	5	8	5	20	22	23
Elfsborg	18	6	5	7	20	23	23
Hammarby	18	5	6	7	30	31	21
IFK Gothenburg	18	6	3	9	17	25	21
Halmstads	18	4	8	6	19	21	20
Norrkoping	18	3	7	8	21	24	16
Kalmar	18	3	5	10	11	28	14

Table as at Sep 2

SWITZERLAND

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Grasshopper	10	8	0	2	30	12	24
Basle	10	5	3	2	20	14	18
Thun	10	5	0	5	20	18	15
Zurich	10	5	0	5	16	16	15
Young Boys	10	4	3	3	16	17	15
Servette	10	4	1	5	18	16	13
Wil 1900	10	3	4	3	17	19	13
Delemont	10	4	0	6	14	16	12
St Gallen	10	3	3	4	14	17	12
Neuchatel X	10	3	3	4	11	16	12
Lucerne*	10	4	2	4	14	19	10
Aarau	10	2	1	7	10	20	7

**4pts deducted for licence application irregularities*
Table as at Sep 1

TURKEY

Aug 16: Denizlispor 1 Galatasaray 3.
Aug 17: Elazigspor 2 Trabzonspor 0; Besiktas 2 Kocaelispor 1; Genclerbirligi 4 Istanbulspor 1; Malatyaspor 1 Gaziantepspor 1; Samsunspor 1 Bursaspor 0.
Aug 18: Adanaspor 2 Diyarbakirspor 1; Altay 4 Goztepe 2; Fenerbahce 1 Ankaragucu 0.
Aug 24: Goztepe 1 Adanaspor 4; Istanbulspor 1 Besiktas 2; Kocaelispor 1 Samsunspor 2; Trabzonspor 0 Altay 0.
Aug 25: Ankaragucu 3 Elazigspor 1; Denizlispor 1 Malatyaspor 0; Diyarbakirspor 1 Genclerbirligi 4; Galatasaray 2 Bursaspor 0.
Aug 30: Besiktas 2 Diyarbakirspor 0.
Aug 31: Adanaspor 0 Trabzonspor 1; Altay 2 Ankaragucu 3; Bursaspor 4 Kocaelispor 2; Malatyaspor 2 Galatasaray 2.
Sep 1: Elazigspor 1 Gaziantepspor 3; Fenerbahce 3 Denizlispor 2; Genclerbirligi 3 Goztepe 1; Samsunspor 1 Istanbulspor 2.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Genclerbirligi	4	4	0	0	14	4	12
Galatasaray	4	3	1	0	11	4	10
Besiktas	4	3	1	0	8	4	10
Adanaspor	4	2	1	1	8	5	7
Ankaragucu	4	2	1	1	7	5	7
Fenerbahce	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Samsunspor	4	2	0	2	5	7	6
Gaziantepspor	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
Altay	4	1	2	1	7	6	5
Trabzonspor	4	1	2	1	1	2	5
Bursaspor	4	1	1	2	6	7	4
Denizlispor	4	1	1	2	5	7	4
Istanbulspor	4	1	1	2	6	9	4
Malatyaspor	4	0	3	1	4	5	3
Elazigspor	4	1	0	3	5	8	3
Goztepe	4	1	0	3	6	12	3
Diyarbakirspor	4	0	1	3	3	9	1
Kocaelispor	4	0	0	4	5	11	0

UKRAINE

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dnipro	8	6	2	0	13	4	20
Arsenal	8	6	1	1	21	7	19
Shakhtar	8	5	2	1	14	8	17
Dynamo	7	5	1	1	15	6	16
Metalurh D	8	5	1	2	13	7	16
Volyn-1	8	4	0	4	9	14	12
Metalurh M	8	2	3	3	10	9	9
Karpaty	7	2	3	2	8	10	9
Vorskla	8	3	0	5	7	11	9
Tavriya	8	2	2	4	12	14	8
Obolon	8	2	2	4	8	11	8
Poligraftekhnika	8	1	5	2	7	12	8
Kryvbas	8	1	4	3	7	9	7
Metalist	8	1	3	4	5	12	6
Metalurh Z	8	1	2	5	4	11	5
Chornomorets	8	1	1	6	4	12	4

Table as at Sep 2

YUGOSLAVIA

YUGOSLAVIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Partizan	4	4	0	0	13	4	12
Obilic	4	3	1	0	4	1	10
Zeleznik	4	3	0	1	10	6	9
Zemun	4	3	0	1	7	4	9
Sartid	4	2	2	0	10	6	8
Vojvodina	4	2	1	1	4	3	7
Javor	4	2	1	1	3	7	7
OFK	4	2	0	2	7	3	6
Cukaricki	3	1	2	0	8	7	5
Zeta	4	1	1	2	3	3	4
Radnicki O	4	1	1	2	4	5	4
Sutjeska	4	1	1	2	1	2	4
Hajduk K	4	1	0	3	6	7	3
Mogren	4	0	3	1	5	8	3
Radnicki N	4	0	2	2	3	8	2
Red Star	3	0	1	2	3	5	1
Rad	4	0	1	3	1	6	1
Rudar P	4	0	1	3	2	9	1

Table as at Sep 1

SOUTH AMERICA

ARGENTINA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, August 16

Velez Sarsfield 1 (Nanni 15)
Arsenal 0

Saturday, August 17

Colon Santa Fe 2 (Carignano 65, Gigena 90)
Huracan 2 (Godoy 39, Padra 76)

Lanus 0
Union Santa Fe 0

San Lorenzo 2 (Acosta 60, Frutos 90)
Banfield 1 (Bilos 76)

Sunday, August 18

Boca Juniors 3 (Battaglia 56, Delgado 58, Bracamonte 83)
Estudiantes 1 (Maggiolo 81)

Chacarita Juniors 1 (Ruggieri 90)
River Plate 2 (Dominguez 62, Cuevas 80)

Gimnasia LP 1 (Enria 68)
Nueva Chicago 0

Newell's Old Boys 4 (Rosales 16, Sacripanti 49, Lagorio 82, Rodas 90)
Talleres Cordoba 1 (Quinteros 36)

Olimpo 2 (Medina 11, Abaurre 17)
Rosario Central 0

Monday, August 19

Racing Club 1 (Romero 22)
Independiente 4 (Rios 15, Silvera 44, Montenegro 76, 83)

Friday, August 23

Huracan 0
Chacarita Juniors 1 (Romero 34)

Saturday, August 24

Independiente 1 (Dominguez 54)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Rosales 39)

Talleres Cordoba 0
Velez Sarsfield 2 (Nanni 73, Valdemarin 87)

Sunday, August 25

Arsenal 2 (Piccolli og 29, Grondona 80)
Colon Santa Fe 3 (Carignano 18, Pereyra 57, Delgado 78)

Banfield 0
Lanus 0
Match abandoned in 24th minute because of crowd disturbances

Boca Juniors 2 (Tevez 26, 37)
San Lorenzo 2 (Chatruc 1, Romagnoli 23)

Estudiantes 0
River Plate 6 (Dominguez 6, Gonzalez 17, Fuertes 24, 33, Coudet 27, Quattrocchi og 55)

Nueva Chicago 2 (Santana 34, Tilger 76)
Olimpo 2 (Carrario 65, Gonzalez 83)

Rosario Central 4 (Ferrari pen 35, De Bruno 45, Delgado 61, Figueroa 77)
Racing Club 0

Union Santa Fe 2 (Capria pen 72, Islas 79)
Gimnasia LP 1 (Enria 17)

Saturday, August 31

Gimnasia LP 0
Banfield 1 (Moreno y Fabianesi 32)

San Lorenzo 3 (Saja pen 47, Acosta 57, Frutos 77)
Estudiantes 1 (Zurita og 69)

Sunday, September 1

Chacarita Juniors 0
Arsenal 1 (Morales 7)

Colon Santa Fe 0
Talleres Cordoba 0

Lanus 1 (Rodriguez pen 24)
Boca Juniors 0

Newell's Old Boys 0
Rosario Central 2 (Figueroa 40, Arriola 86)

Olimpo 2 (Carrario 42, Fernandez og 82)
Union Santa Fe 3 (Silva Pro 40, 51, Fernandez 59)

River Plate 1 (Dominguez 82)
Huracan 2 (Ortiz 26, Padra 79)

Velez Sarsfield 1 (Nanni 58)
Independiente 2 (Silvera 2, Franco 82)

Friday, September 6

Independiente 7 (Delgado og 14, Montenegro 18, Silvera 44, 67, 89, Rios 50, Rivas 73)
Colon Santa Fe 1 (Romagnoli 78)

Saturday, September 7

Rosario Central 1 (Ferrari pen 17)
Velez Sarsfield 1 (Valdemarin 51)

Union Santa Fe 1 (Silva Pro 9)
Racing Club 1 (Rivarola 71)

Sunday, September 8

Arsenal 0
River Plate 0

Banfield 2 (Bilos 25, Sanchez pen 55)
Olimpo 2 (Carrario 13, Tavio 65)

Boca Juniors 2 (Bracamonte 44, 52)
Gimnasia LP 0

Estudiantes 2 (Maggiolo 45, Farias 55)
Huracan 1 (Zermatten 47)

Nueva Chicago 1 (Tilger 57)
Newell's Old Boys 2 (Dominguez 6, Marino 68)

San Lorenzo 1 (Frutos 32)
Lanus 1 (Risso 40)

Talleres Cordoba 0
Chacarita Juniors 3 (Diaz 64, 90, Torales 79)

ARGENTINA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Independiente	7	5	2	0	20	6	17
Rosario Central	7	5	1	1	19	6	16
River Plate	7	4	2	1	11	3	14
Boca Juniors	7	4	2	1	11	4	14
Newell's OB	7	4	2	1	10	6	14
Union Santa Fe	7	3	3	1	9	8	12
Velez Sarsfield	7	3	2	2	9	4	11
San Lorenzo	7	3	2	2	10	9	11
Chacarita Jnrs	7	3	1	3	7	6	10
Colon Santa Fe	7	2	3	2	10	14	9
Arsenal	7	2	2	3	6	7	8
Banfield	6	1	3	2	4	5	6
Olimpo	7	1	3	3	9	11	6
Talleres Cordoba	7	1	3	3	3	9	6
Nueva Chicago	6	1	2	3	4	6	5
Gimnasia LP	7	1	2	4	5	11	5
Racing Club	6	1	2	3	6	13	5
Lanus	6	1	2	3	3	10	5
Estudiantes	7	1	2	4	5	15	5
Huracan	7	1	1	5	6	14	4

LEADING GOALSCORER
6 Andres Silvera (Independiente)

BOLIVIA

BOLIVIA – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolivar	6	3	3	0	13	6	12
Guabira	6	3	3	0	9	6	12
J Wilstermann	6	3	2	1	14	8	11
Blooming	6	3	1	2	17	14	10
Real Potosi	6	2	3	1	9	7	9
The Strongest	6	2	2	2	10	9	8
Oriente	6	1	3	2	13	13	6
Mariscal Braun	5	1	2	2	5	6	5
Union Central	5	1	2	2	6	8	5
Independiente	5	1	2	2	5	7	5
San Jose	5	1	1	3	8	17	4
Iberoamericana	6	1	0	5	3	11	3

Table as at Sep 3

BRAZIL

BRAZIL – NATIONAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventude	8	6	1	1	10	4	19
At Mineiro	9	5	3	1	17	7	18
At Paranaense	8	5	2	1	16	6	17
Sao Paulo	9	5	1	3	15	13	16
Sao Caetano	7	5	0	2	14	6	15
Santos	8	4	2	2	14	10	14
Guarani	8	4	2	2	11	9	14
Coritiba	8	4	1	3	10	9	13
Corinthians	8	4	1	3	9	15	13
Internacional	9	3	4	2	14	11	13
Portuguesa	8	3	3	2	5	6	12
Vitoria	9	3	2	4	14	12	11
Gama	9	3	2	4	7	8	11
Fluminense	9	3	2	4	16	18	11
Botafogo (Rio)	8	2	4	2	10	9	10
Cruzeiro	8	2	4	2	9	12	10
Parana	7	3	0	4	15	11	9
Vasco da Gama	8	3	0	5	11	11	9
Flamengo	9	2	3	4	13	14	9
Gremio	8	2	3	3	10	11	9
Ponte Preta	8	2	2	4	5	6	8
Bahia	8	2	1	5	9	15	7
Palmeiras	8	1	4	3	10	18	7
Goias	8	1	3	4	11	17	6
Figueirense	7	1	2	4	5	13	5
Paysandu	6	1	0	5	6	15	3

Table as at Sep 8

CHILE

CHILE: CLOSING – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Huachipato	4	2	1	1	8	3	7
Colo Colo	4	1	2	1	3	3	5
Dep Temuco	4	1	0	3	4	8	3
Dep Concepcion	4	0	2	2	4	6	2

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cobreloa	4	4	0	0	8	3	12
Cobresal	4	3	1	0	8	5	10
U Catolica	4	2	2	0	7	5	8
Audax Italiano	4	1	2	1	6	6	5

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Coquimbo Unido	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
Sant Morning	4	0	2	2	4	6	2
Palestino	4	0	2	2	3	7	2
Rangers	3	0	0	3	1	8	0

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Chile	4	2	1	1	8	4	7
Union Espanola	4	2	1	1	6	3	7
Sant Wanderers	4	2	1	1	7	6	7
San Felipe	4	1	1	2	5	8	4

Tables as at Aug 25

COLOMBIA

COLOMBIA – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Pasto	9	6	0	3	14	14	18
Indep Santa Fe	9	5	2	2	18	9	17
Dep Cali	9	5	2	2	14	5	17
Bucaramanga	9	5	2	2	16	13	17
At Nacional	9	4	4	1	10	5	16
Tolima	9	4	2	3	15	14	14
Magdalena	9	4	2	3	10	12	14
Once Caldas	9	3	5	1	8	4	14
Quindio	9	4	1	4	8	9	13
Tulua	8	3	2	3	7	7	11
Real Cartagena	9	3	2	4	6	7	11
Indep Medellin	9	3	2	4	7	9	11
Envigado	9	3	1	5	9	11	10
Pereira	9	3	1	5	10	13	10
At Junior	9	2	3	4	9	10	9
At Huila	9	2	2	5	8	14	8
Millonarios	9	2	1	6	10	14	7
America	8	2	0	6	3	12	6

Table as at Sep 1

ECUADOR

ECUADOR – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Quito	13	7	6	0	27	16	27
El Nacional	13	7	4	2	23	11	25
Dep Cuenca	13	6	3	4	19	17	21
Emelec	13	5	4	4	24	22	19
LDU Quito	13	7	2	4	24	15	23
Espoli	13	3	5	5	20	25	14
Barcelona	13	3	4	6	15	18	13
Olmedo	13	2	7	4	12	18	13
Aucas	13	1	6	6	19	29	9
Macara	13	1	5	7	12	24	8

Table as at Sep 8

PARAGUAY

PARAGUAY – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
12 de Octubre	10	5	2	3	13	9	17
Libertad	10	4	4	2	14	6	16
Sportivo Luqueno	10	4	4	2	11	7	16
Guarani	10	4	3	3	13	10	15
Olimpia	10	4	2	4	15	15	14
Recoleta	10	4	2	4	11	12	14
Cerro Porteno	10	3	4	3	13	11	13
San Lorenzo	10	4	1	5	10	18	13
Sport Colombia	10	3	2	5	12	18	11
Sol de America	10	1	4	5	7	13	7

Table as at Sep 8

PERU

PERU – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting Cristal	9	6	3	0	21	2	21
Alianza Lima	9	5	3	1	12	5	18
Alianza Atletico	9	5	2	2	12	9	17
Estudiantes	9	4	3	2	18	8	15
Sport Boys	9	4	2	3	17	10	14
Cienciano	9	4	1	4	15	18	13
Dep Wanka	9	2	6	1	8	9	12
Universitario	9	3	1	5	14	18	10
Coronel Bolognesi	9	2	2	5	7	14	8
Coopsol Trujillo	9	2	2	5	6	20	8
Melgar	9	0	5	4	6	14	5
Juan Aurich	9	1	2	6	5	14	5

Table as at Sep 8

URUGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Aug 17: Dep Maldonado 0 Fenix 7.
Aug 18: Penarol 4 Villa Espanola 0; Danubio 1 Central Espanol 0; Defensor 1 Plaza 0.
Aug 21: Nacional 1 Wanderers 0.
Aug 24: Penarol 5 Central Espanol 1; Fenix 1 Wanderers 0; Plaza 2 Danubio 0.
Aug 25: Villa Espanola 1 Defensor 2; Nacional 2 Dep Maldonado 1.
Aug 30: Defensor 4 Dep Maldonado 1.
Aug 31: Central Espanol 3 Villa Espanola 2; Fenix 1 Danubio 3.
Sep 1: Penarol 0 Nacional 2; Wanderers 2 Plaza 2.
Sep 6: Dep Maldonado 0 Wanderers 0.
Sep 7: Plaza 3 Villa Espanola 1; Defensor 2 Nacional 3.
Sep 8: Danubio 1 Penarol 3; Central Espanol 1 Fenix 4.

URUGUAY: OPENING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional	9	8	1	0	20	6	25
Penarol	9	7	0	2	25	12	21
Fenix	9	6	0	3	22	11	18
Dep Maldonado	9	4	2	3	10	17	14
Wanderers	9	3	3	3	8	9	12
Defensor	9	4	0	5	15	17	12
Danubio	9	3	2	4	12	14	11
Plaza	9	2	2	5	10	13	8
Central Espanol	9	2	1	6	13	21	7
Villa Espanola	9	0	1	8	8	23	1

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Aug 15: Tigres 0 Cruz Azul 1.
Aug 17: At Celaya 1 Veracruz 1; Toluca 4 Morelia 1; Jaguares 1 Guadalajara 1; Monterrey 1 Pumas UNAM 2; Atlas 2 Atlante 1.
Aug 18: Gallos Blancos 1 Necaxa 3; Puebla 3 Santos 1; Tecos UAG 1 Tigres 3; America 2 San Luis 1.
Aug 24: Veracruz 1 Monterrey 1; Morelia 2 Atlas 0; San Luis 0 Jaguares 1; Tigres 6 At Celaya 1.
Aug 25: Atlante 2 Gallos Blancos 1; Guadalajara 1 Cruz Azul 1; Pumas UNAM 1 Toluca 4; Pachuca 0 Tecos UAG 2; Necaxa 2 Puebla 0; Santos 0 America 1.
Aug 31: Jaguares 2 Santos 0; Toluca 1 Veracruz 1; At Celaya 1 Monterrey 0; Cruz Azul 0 San Luis 1; Tigres 1 Pachuca 1; America 2 Necaxa 1; Atlas 6 Pumas UNAM 0.
Sep 1: Gallos Blancos 1 Morelia 0; Puebla 1 Atlante 1; Tecos UAG 1 Guadalajara 1.
Sep 7: Veracruz 3 Atlas 0; Morelia 2 Puebla 0; Monterrey 3 Toluca 1; Necaxa 3 Jaguares 1; San Luis 0 Tecos UAG 0.
Sep 8: Pumas UNAM 1 Gallos Blancos 1; Atlante 1 America 4; Pachuca 0 At Celaya 2; Guadalajara 4 Tigres 0; Santos 1 Cruz Azul 3.

GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	5	5	0	0	10	3	15
Toluca	6	4	1	1	16	8	13
Atlas	6	3	0	3	12	10	9
At Celaya	6	2	1	3	7	11	7
Puebla	6	1	2	3	5	8	5

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tecos UAG	6	3	2	1	9	7	11
Tigres	6	3	1	2	13	9	10
Pumas UNAM	6	3	1	2	7	13	10
Monterrey	6	2	1	3	7	7	7
Pachuca	4	0	2	2	4	8	2

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morelia	6	4	0	2	11	8	12
Necaxa	6	3	0	3	11	10	9
San Luis	6	2	2	2	4	4	8
Jaguares	6	2	2	2	9	10	8
Cruz Azul	5	2	1	2	6	5	7

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guadalajara	6	1	4	1	8	5	7
Veracruz	6	1	3	2	10	9	6
Gallos Blancos	6	1	3	2	5	7	6
Atlante	6	1	1	4	7	13	4
Santos	6	1	1	4	4	10	4

LEADING GOALSCORER
7 Jose Cardozo (Toluca)

UNITED STATES

Aug 17: Los Angeles Galaxy 4 Colorado Rapids 0; San Jose Earthquakes 2 DC United 2 (aet); MetroStars 1 Dallas Burn 3.
Aug 18: Kansas City Wizards 0 Columbus Crew 4; New England Revolution 0 Chicago Fire 2.
Aug 21: Los Angeles Galaxy 2 Kansas City Wizards 1; San Jose Earthquakes 3 Dallas Burn 1.
Aug 24: Colorado Rapids 3 San Jose Earthquakes 0; Chicago Fire 1 New England Revolution 2; Dallas Burn 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 0 (aet).
Aug 25: MetroStars 1 DC United 0.
Aug 28: New England Revolution 3 Colorado Rapids 1.
Aug 31: Los Angeles Galaxy 3 MetroStars 0; DC United 4 San Jose Earthquakes 2; Columbus Crew 0 New England Revolution 0 (aet); Kansas City Wizards 2 Chicago Fire 1.
Sep 1: Colorado Rapids 3 Dallas Burn 2.
Sep 5: Dallas Burn 1 MetroStars 3.
Sep 7: San Jose Earthquakes 4 Columbus Crew 3 (aet); New England Revolution 3 DC United 0; Chicago Fire 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 2.

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Columbus Crew	26	10	5	11	41	41	35
MetroStars	25	11	2	12	40	41	35
Chicago Fire	26	10	4	12	41	35	34
New England	26	10	2	14	44	48	32
DC United	25	7	5	13	25	35	26

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
San Jose	26	14	3	9	45	33	45
LA Galaxy	26	14	3	9	42	33	45
Dallas Burn	26	11	7	8	39	38	40
Colorado Rapids	26	12	3	11	40	46	39
Kansas City	26	9	8	9	35	42	35

LEADING GOALSCORER
22 Carlos Ruiz (Los Angeles Galaxy)

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

August 17

Jeanne d'Arc (Sen) 0
TP Mazembe (DRC) 1 (Ngoy 12)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Quartey (Gha)

August 18

Raja Casablanca (Mor) 2 (Jrindou 73, Diallo 90)
Al Ahly (Egy) 1 (Belal 90)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Chukwujekwu (Nig)

September 1

Al Ahly 1 (Belal 52)
TP Mazembe 0
HT: 0-0

Jeanne d'Arc 1 (Da Costa 45)
Raja Casablanca 2 (Hicham 11, 42)
HT: 1-2

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TP Mazembe	3	2	0	1	3	1	6
Raja Casablanca	3	2	0	1	4	4	6
Jeanne d'Arc	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
Al Ahly	3	1	0	2	3	4	3

Group B

August 17

Esperance (Tun) 1 (Sane 79)
Zamalek (Egy) 1 (H Hassan 20)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** El Arjoun (Mor)

August 18

ASEC Abidjan (IvC) 5 (Dansoko 3, 46, Beugre 14, Tiene 33, Bakari Kone)
Costa do Sol (Moz) 0
HT: 3-0

August 31

Costa do Sol 0
Zamalek 2 (Ali 61, W Abdelattif 67)
HT: 0-0

Esperance 2 (Chaabani 53, Badra 66)
ASEC Abidjan 0
HT: 0-0

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zamalek	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Esperance	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
ASEC Abidjan	3	1	0	2	6	5	3
Costa do Sol	3	0	0	3	0	8	0

Top two in each group qualify for semi-finals

ASIA

JAPAN

FIRST STAGE

Aug 17: Kashiwa Reysol 2 Jubilo Iwata 3; Urawa Reds 1 JEF United Ichihara 2; Kashima Antlers 2 Gamba Osaka 1; Yokohama F Marinos 0 Shimizu S-Pulse 0 (aet); FC Tokyo 1 Nagoya Grampus Eight 2; Vissel Kobe 2 Sanfrecce Hiroshima 1; Consadole Sapporo 1 Tokyo Verdy 1969 2 (aet); Kyoto Purple Sanga 2 Vegalta Sendai 1 (aet).

JAPAN: FIRST STAGE – FINAL

	P	W1	W2	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jubilo Iwata	15	9	4	1	1	39	17	36
Yokohama FM	15	8	3	3	1	28	11	33
Grampus Eight	15	9	1	0	5	28	18	29
Gamba Osaka	15	8	1	1	5	35	19	27
Kashima Antlers	15	9	0	0	6	21	18	27
Kyoto PS	15	5	4	1	5	26	18	24
Shimizu S-Pulse	15	5	3	3	4	17	19	24
JEF United	15	6	1	3	5	22	23	23
Vegalta Sendai	15	6	1	0	8	23	27	20
FC Tokyo	15	5	0	2	8	23	27	17
Urawa Reds	15	3	2	1	7	21	24	14
Tokyo Verdy	15	2	3	1	9	15	24	13
Vissel Kobe	15	3	1	1	10	12	22	12
Kashiwa Reysol	15	3	1	0	11	20	31	11
Sanfrecce H	15	3	0	1	11	14	26	10
Consadole Sapp	15	2	0	0	13	15	35	6

W1 = win in 90mins – 3pts; W2 = win in extra time – 2pts; Draw = 1pt

SECOND STAGE

Aug 31: Consadole Sapporo 2 Kashiwa Reysol 2 (aet); Vegalta Sendai 1 Kashima Antlers 2; Tokyo Verdy 1969 5 Kyoto Purple Sanga 0; Jubilo Iwata 1 Vissel Kobe 0; Gamba Osaka 4 Yokohama F Marinos 1; Sanfrecce Hiroshima 1 Urawa Reds 2 (aet).
Sep 1: JEF United Ichihara 0 FC Tokyo 1; Nagoya Grampus Eight 3 Shimizu S-Pulse 0.

Keir Radnedge reports on the opening games of the European Championship qualifying campaign

Hitting the road to Lisbon

AS Portugal, the Euro 2004 hosts, hit back for a 1-1 draw in a friendly against England in Birmingham, the rest of the continent set off over the weekend of September 7/8 on the qualifying road to Lisbon.

In **Group 1**, current European title holders and deposed world champions France scratched their way to a 2-1 win away to Cyprus. Yiannakis Okkas threatened a Senegal-style upset when he opened the scoring after 14 minutes, but France, under new boss Jacques Santini, recovered with strikes from Djibril Cisse – his first at senior international level – and Sylvain Wiltord. Santini complained later about his side's defensive weaknesses, which appeared to cast further doubts about how long he may keep faith with skipper Marcel Desailly.

Slovenia were the early group leaders after showing how minnows should be dismissed with a 3-0 win at home to Malta.

The Scandinavian derby in **Group 2** ended with honours even after a 2-2 draw between Norway and Denmark. John Carew came to Norway's rescue with a late equaliser.

Romania took advantage of that draw to go top after a 3-0 win in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Holland, bitterly disappointed to have missed the World Cup, took an early lead in **Group 3** when goals from Edgar Davids, Patrick Kluivert and Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink brought a 3-0 home win over Belarus.

Austria also started with a victory, their 2-0 home success over Moldova coming from two first-half penalties by Andreas Herzog.

Poland, in **Group 4**, had to wait until the last 15 minutes to break the deadlock away to San Marino. But their eventual 2-0 win was enough to give them an early edge since Sweden were held goalless in Latvia.

In **Group 5** the Faroe Islands came close to causing the shock of the round when they raced to an early 2-0 lead against a dismal Scotland. Schoolteacher John Petersen scored both goals and later admitted to his surprise at "how easy it was – considering Scotland's central defenders both play in the Premiership".

Some harsh words in the Scottish dressing-room at half-time sparked a revival that brought equalising efforts from Paul Lambert and Barry Ferguson. Manager Berti Vogts thus ended a depressing record run of five consecutive defeats, but that was little consolation to him, his players or furious fans and media back home.

Germany took advantage of the Scots' problems to seize instant command of the group. Footballer of the Year Michael Ballack set them on their way towards a 2-0 win over Lithuania in Kaunas.

Individual hero of the round was Raul Gonzalez in **Group 6**. He not only captained Spain to their 2-0 win in Greece but also struck his 29th goal for his country to equal Fernando Hierro's all-time record. Raul also set up his side's second for playmaker Juan Carlos Valeron.

"Of course I am pleased to share the record," said Raul, "but I am even happier because of the way the team played. We passed a tough test with flying colours."

In the group's other tie, Armenia's Albert Sarkisyan converted a late penalty to earn a 2-2 home draw with Ukraine.

Turkey, fresh from their third-place finish at the World Cup, fired a European warning by strolling to a 3-0 win over Slovakia in **Group 7**. Arif Erdem scored twice and made the opener for Serhat Akin in a victory that coach Senol Gunes claimed was too easy. He complained afterwards that he wanted a stiffer test to avert the dangers of complacency.

Next time out, on October 12, Turkey visit Macedonia, who were disappointed to manage only a 1-1 draw away to Liechtenstein. A late goal from Michael Stocklasa earned the hosts a rare competitive point.

Estonia earned an excellent away point in **Group 8** with a goalless draw in Croatia, while Bulgaria were delighted with the revival signposted by a surprise 2-0 win in Belgium. The goals that disappointed new Belgium boss Aime Antheunis came from Yugoslavia-born striker Zoran Yankovic and Stilian Petrov.

In **Group 9**, the October 16 match-up between Wales and Italy in Cardiff takes on extra significance after both nations began with 2-0 away wins.

Mark Hughes' men worked well to beat Finland in Helsinki, the goals coming from John Hartson and Tottenham's ever more impressive Simon Davies. As for Italy in Azerbaijan, Alex Del Piero secured the points from a trademark free-kick after a first-half own goal by Tarlan Akhmedov.

Wait for it...Wales defend a Finnish corner during their 2-0 win

'The Faroe Islands came close to causing the shock of the round when racing to a 2-0 lead against a dismal Scotland'

Italy's under-pressure coach Giovanni Trapattoni said: "We won thanks to sheer guts and determination. After what happened at the World Cup we knew the priority was to win, never mind how we did it."

Russia scored a potentially decisive opening victory in **Group 10**, beating the Republic of Ireland 4-2. While controversy continued to rage in the Irish camp over the absence of skipper Roy Keane, Russia delighted new boss Victor Gazzayev with two early goals from Andrei Karyaka and Vladimir Beschastnykh. The Irish twice reduced the deficit, but each time Russia pulled away again – despite missing the suspended Spartak striker Dmitri Sychev.

Early group leadership, however, was secured by Switzerland after a 4-1 win over Georgia in Basle. Veteran striker Stephane Chapuisat, 33, celebrated his return from national team retirement by scoring the fourth goal. Alexander Frei, Hakan Yakin and Patrick Muller claimed the first three, with Shota Arveladze bringing Georgia briefly on terms.

● *Full results and fixtures overleaf.*

QUALIFIERS

Group 1

France, Slovenia, Israel, Cyprus, Malta

Sep 7 - Nicosia
Cyprus 1 (Okkas 14)
France 2 (Cisse 39, Wiltord 51)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Fandel (Ger)
Cyprus: N Panayiotou - Theodotou, Konnafis, Ioakim, Daskalakis (C Michael 68), Spyrou, Kaiafas, Satsias, N Nicolaou (Agathocleous 74), Okkas, Rauffmann (Yiasoumi 62).
France: Coupet - Thuram, Christanval, Desailly, Silvestre, Vieira, Makelele, Marlet (Govou 70), Zidane, Wiltord (Kapo 79), Cisse.

Sep 7 - Ljubljana
Slovenia 3 (Debono og 37, Siljak 59, Cimirotic 90)
Malta 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Borovilos (Gre)
Slovenia: Simeunovic - Karic, Vugdalic, Bulajic, Knavs, Sukalo (Gajser 74), Siljak (Rakovic 90), Zahovic, Pavlin, Cimirotic, Acimovic (Radosavljevic 86).
Malta: Muscat - Said, Chetcuti, Carabott, Debono, Dimech, Agius, Giglio, Michael Mifsud (A Mifsud 88), Mallia (Bogdanovic 71), Nwoko. *Sent off: Giglio 90min.*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slovenia	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
France	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Israel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cyprus	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Malta	1	0	0	1	0	3	0

07.09.02.....Cyprus-France.....1-2
07.09.02.....Slovenia-Malta.....3-0
12.10.02.....France-Slovenia
12.10.02.....Malta-Israel
16.10.02.....Israel-Cyprus
16.10.02.....Malta-France
20.11.02.....Cyprus-Malta
29.03.03.....Cyprus-Israel
29.03.03.....France-Malta
02.04.03.....Israel-France
02.04.03.....Slovenia-Cyprus
30.04.03.....Malta-Slovenia
07.06.03.....Israel-Slovenia
07.06.03.....Malta-Cyprus
06.09.03.....France-Cyprus
06.09.03.....Slovenia-Israel
10.09.03.....Israel-Malta
10.09.03.....Slovenia-France
11.10.03.....Cyprus-Slovenia
11.10.03.....France-Israel

Group 2

Romania, Denmark, Norway, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Luxembourg

Sep 7 - Sarajevo
Bosnia-Herzegovina 0
Romania 3 (Chivu 7, D Munteanu 8, Ganea 27)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Cardoso Cortez Batista (Por)
Bosnia: Piplica - Beslija (Brkic 41), Music, Hibic, Rizvic, Ikanovic (Huric 37), Hota, Muratovic, Salihamidzic, Bajramovic (Akrapovic 46), Mulina.
Romania: Stelea (Vintila 33) - Contra, Gheorghe Popescu, Filipescu, Chivu, Codrea (Ghioane 84), Radoi, D Munteanu, Mutu, Ganea, Niculae (Cernat 66).

Sep 7 - Oslo
Norway 2 (Riise 54, Carew 90)
Denmark 2 (Tomasson 23, 72)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 25,141. **Ref:** Dallas (Sco)
Norway: Grodas - Basma, H Berg, R Johnsen, Bergdolmo, Leonhardsen (R Strand 77), Andersen (Carew 77), E Bakke (Svindal Larsen 88), Riise, Solskjaer, Iversen.
Denmark: Sorensen - Helveg, Lustu, Laursen, N Jensen, Rommedahl (Michaelsen 59), Poulsen, Gravesen, Gronkjaer (C Jensen 70), Tomasson (Per Nielsen 90), Sand.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Romania	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Denmark	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Norway	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bosnia-Herz	1	0	0	1	0	3	0

07.09.02.....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Romania.....0-3
07.09.02.....Norway-Denmark.....2-2
12.10.02.....Denmark-Luxembourg
12.10.02.....Romania-Norway
16.10.02.....Luxembourg-Romania
16.10.02.....Norway-Bosnia-Herzegovina
29.03.03.....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Luxembourg
29.03.03.....Romania-Denmark
02.04.03.....Denmark-Bosnia-Herzegovina
02.04.03.....Luxembourg-Norway
07.06.03.....Denmark-Norway
07.06.03.....Romania-Bosnia-Herzegovina
11.06.03.....Luxembourg-Denmark
11.06.03.....Norway-Romania
06.09.03.....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Norway
06.09.03.....Romania-Luxembourg
10.09.03.....Denmark-Romania
10.09.03.....Luxembourg-Bosnia-Herzegovina
11.10.03.....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Denmark
11.10.03.....Norway-Luxembourg

Group 3

Czech Republic, Holland, Austria, Belarus, Moldova

Sep 7 - Vienna
Austria 2 (Herzog pen 4, pen 30)
Moldova 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 18,300. **Ref:** Dougal (Sco)
Austria: Manninger - Dospel, Baur, Martin Hiden, Panis, Aufhauser, Schopp (Wimmer 58), Flogel, Wallner (Linz 68), Herzog, Vastic (Wagner 81).
Moldova: Hmaruc - Covalenco, Rebeja, Olexic, Sosnovschi, Priganiuc (Boret 68), Berco (Catinsus 46), Rogaciov, Ivanov, Clescenco, Boicenco (Cebotari 46).

Sep 7 - Eindhoven
Holland 3 (Davids 34, Kluivert 36, Hasselbaink 72)
Belarus 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 34,000. **Ref:** Barber (Eng)
Holland: Van der Sar - Ricksen, F De Boer, Stam, Zenden, Van der Meyde, Cocu, Van Bommel, Davids (Van der Vaart 69; Reiziger 81), Kluivert, Van Nistelrooy (Hasselbaink 69).
Belarus: Shantalosov (Khomutovsky 86) - Kulchy, Ostrovski, Lukhvich, Shtanyuk, Gurenko, Khatskevich (Kovba 80), Romaschenko, Omelyanchuk (Shuneiko 75), Hleb, Kutuzov. *Sent off: Romaschenko 82min.*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Holland	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Austria	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Czech Republic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moldova	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Belarus	1	0	0	1	0	3	0

07.09.02.....Austria-Moldova.....2-0
07.09.02.....Holland-Belarus.....3-0
12.10.02.....Belarus-Austria
12.10.02.....Moldova-Czech Republic
16.10.02.....Austria-Holland
16.10.02.....Czech Republic-Belarus
29.03.03.....Belarus-Moldova
29.03.03.....Holland-Czech Republic
02.04.03.....Czech Republic-Austria
02.04.03.....Moldova-Holland
07.06.03.....Belarus-Holland
07.06.03.....Moldova-Austria
11.06.03.....Austria-Belarus
11.06.03.....Czech Republic-Moldova
06.09.03.....Belarus-Czech Republic
06.09.03.....Holland-Austria
10.09.03.....Czech Republic-Holland
10.09.03.....Moldova-Belarus
11.10.03.....Austria-Czech Republic
11.10.03.....Holland-Moldova

Group 4

Sweden, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, San Marino

Sep 7 - Riga
Latvia 0
Sweden 0
Att: 8,500. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Latvia: Kolinko - Igor Stepanovs, Astafjevs, Zemlinskis, Laizans, Blagonadezdins, Isakovs, Bleidelis, Pahars (Stolcers 80), Rubins, Verpakovskis.
Sweden: Hedman - Mellberg, Jakobsson, Michael Svensson, Antonelius, Linderoth, Alexandersson, Farnerud (Jonson 56), Magnus Svensson (Johansson 79), Allback, Ibrahimovic (Kallstrom 65).

Sep 7 - Serravalle
San Marino 0
Poland 2 (Kaczorowski 75, Kukielka 88)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** McKeon (Ire)
San Marino: F Gasperoni - Gennari, Mauro Marani, Albani, Matteoni, S Bacciocchi, Moretti (Zonzini 70), Michele Marani, Ugolini (De Luigi 78), A Selva, Vannucci (R Selva 83).
Poland: Kowalewski - J Bak, Glowacki, Kos, Kaczorowski, Kaluzny (Marcin Zewlakow 60), Kosowski, Kukielka, Olisadebe (M Lewandowski 80), Wichniarek (Dawidowski 46), Zurawski.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Poland	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Latvia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Sweden	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Hungary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
San Marino	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

07.09.02.....Latvia-Sweden.....0-0
07.09.02.....San Marino-Poland.....0-2
12.10.02.....Poland-Latvia
12.10.02.....Sweden-Hungary
16.10.02.....Hungary-San Marino
20.11.02.....San Marino-Latvia
29.03.03.....Poland-Hungary
02.04.03.....Hungary-Sweden
02.04.03.....Poland-San Marino
30.04.03.....Latvia-San Marino
07.06.03.....Hungary-Latvia
07.06.03.....San Marino-Sweden
11.06.03.....San Marino-Hungary
11.06.03.....Sweden-Poland
06.09.03.....Latvia-Poland
06.09.03.....Sweden-San Marino
10.09.03.....Latvia-Hungary
10.09.03.....Poland-Sweden
11.10.03.....Hungary-Poland
11.10.03.....Sweden-Latvia

Group 5

Germany, Scotland, Iceland, Lithuania, Faroe Islands

Sep 7 - Toftir
Faroe Islands 2 (J Petersen 7, 13)
Scotland 2 (Lambert 62, Ferguson 83)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Granat (Pol)
Faroe Islands: Knudsen - Johannesen, J K Hansen, Thorsteinsson, J R Jacobsen, Elttor (Lakjuni 89), Benjaminsen, J Johnsson, a Borg, J Petersen (Flotum 80), C Jacobsen (R Jacobsen 75).
Scotland: Douglas - Ross (G Alexander 76), Crainey, Dailly, Weir, Ferguson, Dobie (Thompson 83), Lambert, Kyle, Dickov (Crawford 46), Johnston.

Sep 7 - Kaunas
Lithuania 0
Germany 2 (Ballack 25, Stankevicius og 58)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,500. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)
Lithuania: Stauce - Stankevicius, Gleveckas, Dedura, Skarbalius, Semberas, R Zutautas, Mikalajunas, Razanauskas (Morinas 71), Poskus, Jankauskas (Fomenka 77).
Germany: Kahn - Linke, Ramelow, Metzelder, Hamann, Frings, Bohme, Ballack, Schneider (Jeremies 85), Klose, Jancker (Neuville 68).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Faroe Islands	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Scotland	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Iceland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lithuania	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

07.09.02.....Faroe Islands-Scotland.....2-2
07.09.02.....Lithuania-Germany.....0-2
12.10.02.....Iceland-Scotland
12.10.02.....Lithuania-Faroe Islands
16.10.02.....Germany-Faroe Islands
16.10.02.....Iceland-Lithuania
29.03.03.....Germany-Lithuania
29.03.03.....Scotland-Iceland
02.04.03.....Lithuania-Scotland
07.06.03.....Iceland-Faroe Islands
07.06.03.....Scotland-Germany
11.06.03.....Faroe Islands-Germany
11.06.03.....Lithuania-Iceland
20.08.03.....Faroe Islands-Iceland
06.09.03.....Iceland-Germany
06.09.03.....Scotland-Faroe Islands
10.09.03.....Faroe Islands-Lithuania
10.09.03.....Germany-Scotland
11.10.03.....Germany-Iceland
11.10.03.....Scotland-Lithuania

Group 6

Spain, Ukraine, Greece, Northern Ireland, Armenia

Sep 7 - Yerevan
Armenia 2 (Petrosyan 73, Sarkisyan pen 90)
Ukraine 2 (Serebrennikov 2, Zubov 33)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Vuorela (Fin)
Armenia: Berezovski - Artur Mkrtchyan (Sarkisyan 60), Minasyan (Voskanyan 46), Hovsepyan, Vardanyan, Hachatryan, Petrosyan, Bilibio, K Dokhoyan, Artavazd Karamian, Arman Karamian (Movsesian 71).

Ukraine: Reva - Luzhnyi, Nesmachnyi, Tymoshchuk, Serebrennikov, Kormiltsev, Husin (Maksymyuk 65; Popov 90), Zubov (Spivak 69), Vorobei, Yezerskyi, Moroz. *Sent off: Yezerskyi 90min.*

Sep 7 - Athens

Greece 0

Spain 2 (Raul 8, Valeron 77)

HT: 0-1. **Att:** 16,500. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)

Greece: Nikopolidis - Dabizas, Dellas, K Konstantinidis (Karagounis 40), Patsatzoglou, Zagorakis (Basinas 46), Fissas (Vryzas 72), Giannakopoulos, Tsartas, Nikolaidis, Haristeas.

Spain: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Garcia Calvo, Marchena, Raul Bravo, Xavi (Baraja 59), Ivan Helguera, Joaquin (Mendieta 59), Valeron (Cesar 87), Vicente, Raul.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Armenia	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Ukraine	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Northern Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greece	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

07.09.02.....Armenia-Ukraine 2-2
07.09.02.....Greece-Spain.....0-2
12.10.02.....Spain-Northern Ireland
12.10.02.....Ukraine-Greece
16.10.02.....Greece-Armenia
16.10.02.....Northern Ireland-Ukraine
29.03.03.....Armenia-Northern Ireland
29.03.03.....Ukraine-Spain
02.04.03.....Northern Ireland-Greece
02.04.03.....Spain-Armenia
07.06.03.....Spain-Greece
07.06.03.....Ukraine-Armenia
11.06.03.....Greece-Ukraine
11.06.03.....Northern Ireland-Spain
06.09.03.....Armenia-Greece
06.09.03.....Ukraine-Northern Ireland
10.09.03.....Northern Ireland-Armenia
10.09.03.....Spain-Ukraine
11.10.03.....Armenia-Spain
11.10.03.....Greece-Northern Ireland

Group 7

Turkey, England, Slovakia, Macedonia, Liechtenstein

Sep 7 - Istanbul

Turkey 3 (Serhat 14, Arif 45, 65)

Slovakia 0

HT: 2-0. **Att:** 19,750. **Ref:** Lopez Nieto (Spa)

Turkey: Rustu - Fatih Akyel, Bulent, Alpay, Hakan Unsal, Okan (Nihat 63), Tugay, Basturk, Emre Belozoglu (Cihan 78), Arif, Serhat (Umit Davala 87).

Slovakia: Bucek - Cisovsky, Dzurik, Spilar, Labant (Michalik 61), Kisel, Janocko, Karhan, Gresko (Hlinka 72), Vittek, Kozlej (Reiter 55).

Sep 8 - Vaduz

Liechtenstein 1 (Michael Stocklasa 90)

Macedonia 1 (Hristov 7)

HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Godulyan (Ukr)

Liechtenstein: Jehle - Ritter, Gigon (Burgmeier 83), D Hasler, Michael Stocklasa, Martin Stocklasa, Telser (D'Elia 83), Gerster, T Beck, Frick, M Beck (R Buchel 46).

Macedonia: Milosevski - Braga (Grncarov 85), Petrov, Sedloski, Nikolovski, I Mitrevski, Sumulikoski, Pandev (Stojkov 70), Hristov (Popov 58), Sakiri, A Mitrevski.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Turkey	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Liechtenstein	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Macedonia	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
England	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slovakia	1	0	0	1	0	3	0

07.09.02.....Turkey-Slovakia 3-0
08.09.02.....Liechtenstein-Macedonia 1-1
12.10.02.....Macedonia-Turkey
12.10.02.....Slovakia-England
16.10.02.....England-Macedonia
16.10.02.....Turkey-Liechtenstein
29.03.03.....Liechtenstein-England
29.03.03.....Macedonia-Slovakia
02.04.03.....England-Turkey
02.04.03.....Slovakia-Liechtenstein
07.06.03.....Macedonia-Liechtenstein
07.06.03.....Slovakia-Turkey
11.06.03.....England-Slovakia
11.06.03.....Turkey-Macedonia
06.09.03.....Liechtenstein-Turkey
06.09.03.....Macedonia-England
10.09.03.....England-Liechtenstein
10.09.03.....Slovakia-Macedonia
11.10.03.....Liechtenstein-Slovakia
11.10.03.....Turkey-England

Group 8

Belgium, Croatia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Andorra

Sep 7 - Brussels

Belgium 0

Bulgaria 2 (Yankovic 17, Stilian Petrov 63)

HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)

Belgium: De Vlieger - Vreven, Simons, Van Buyten, P Van der Heyden (B Peeters 64), Englebert (M Mpenza 53), Vanderhaeghe, Baseggio, Goor, Sonck, E Mpenza (Thijs 70).

Bulgaria: Zdravkov - Kishishev, Pazin, Kirilov, Peev (G Petrov 83), I Petkov, Yankovic (Chilikov 77), Balakov, Stilian Petrov, M Petkov (Zagorcic 90), M Petrov.

Sep 7 - Osijek

Croatia 0

Estonia 0

Att: 12,000. **Ref:** Fernandez Marin (Spa)

Croatia: Pletikosa - Tokic, D Simic, Zivkovic, Saric (Tomas 79), S Maric (Rapajic 46), Vugrinec, Tapalovic, Babic, Olic, T Maric (Petric 60).

Estonia: Poom - Allas, Stepanov, Piiroja, Saviauk, M Rooba, Reim, Kristal, Lindpere (U Rooba 59), Oper, Zelinski.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bulgaria	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Croatia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Estonia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Andorra	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Belgium	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

07.09.02.....Belgium-Bulgaria.....0-2
07.09.02.....Croatia-Estonia.....0-0
12.10.02.....Andorra-Belgium
12.10.02.....Bulgaria-Croatia
16.10.02.....Bulgaria-Andorra
16.10.02.....Estonia-Belgium
29.03.03.....Croatia-Belgium
02.04.03.....Croatia-Andorra
02.04.03.....Estonia-Bulgaria
30.04.03.....Andorra-Estonia
07.06.03.....Bulgaria-Belgium
07.06.03.....Estonia-Andorra
11.06.03.....Belgium-Andorra
11.06.03.....Estonia-Croatia
06.09.03.....Andorra-Croatia
06.09.03.....Bulgaria-Estonia
10.09.03.....Andorra-Bulgaria
10.09.03.....Belgium-Croatia
11.10.03.....Belgium-Estonia
11.10.03.....Croatia-Bulgaria

Group 9

Italy, Yugoslavia, Finland, Wales, Azerbaijan

Sep 7 - Baku

Azerbaijan 0

Italy 2 (Akhmedov og 32, Del Piero 63)

HT: 0-1. **Att:** 37,000. **Ref:** Vassaras (Gre)

Azerbaijan: Kramarenko - Agaev, Kerimov, Akhmedov, K Guliev, S Aliyev (Nabiyev 88), Emin Guliev, Sadygov, M Gurbanov (Musaev 68), Imamaliyev, G Gurbanov (Ismailov 90).

Italy: Buffon - Panucci, Nesta, Cannavaro, Coco, Di Biagio (Ambrosini 57), Tommasi, Gattuso, Del Piero, F Inzaghi (Pirlo 78), Vieri (Montella 57).

Sep 7 - Helsinki

Finland 0

Wales 2 (Hartson 30, Davies 72)

HT: 0-1. **Att:** 35,833. **Ref:** Plautz (Aut)

Finland: A Niemi - Nylund (Johansson 69), Hyypia, Tihinen, Saarinen (Kopteff 78), Nurmela (Kottila 86), Riihilahti, Tainio, Kolkka, Litmanen, Kuqi.

Wales: P Jones - Delaney, Melville, Gabbidon, Speed, Pembridge, Davies, Savage, Johnson (Bellamy 76), Giggs, Hartson.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Wales	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Yugoslavia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Azerbaijan	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Finland	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

07.09.02.....Azerbaijan-Italy.....0-2
07.09.02.....Finland-Wales 0-2
12.10.02.....Finland-Azerbaijan
12.10.02.....Italy-Yugoslavia
16.10.02.....Wales-Italy
16.10.02.....Yugoslavia-Finland
20.11.02.....Azerbaijan-Wales
12.02.03.....Yugoslavia-Azerbaijan
29.03.03.....Italy-Finland
29.03.03.....Wales-Azerbaijan
02.04.03.....Yugoslavia-Wales
07.06.03.....Finland-Yugoslavia
11.06.03.....Azerbaijan-Yugoslavia
11.06.03.....Finland-Italy
06.09.03.....Azerbaijan-Finland
06.09.03.....Italy-Wales
10.09.03.....Wales-Finland
10.09.03.....Yugoslavia-Italy
11.10.03.....Italy-Azerbaijan
11.10.03.....Wales-Yugoslavia

Group 10

Rep Ireland, Russia, Switzerland, Georgia, Albania

Sep 7 - Moscow

Russia 4 (Karyaka 20, Beschastnykh 24, Kerzhakov 71, Babb og 88)

Rep Ireland 2 (Doherty 69, Morrison 76)

HT: 2-0. **Att:** 23,000. **Ref:** Colombo (Fra)

Russia: Ovchinnikov - Nizhegorodov, Ignashevich, Aldonin, Semak (Khokhlov 75), Yanovsky, Onopko, Gusev (Solomatin 29), Karyaka, Loskov, Beschastnykh (Kerzhakov 46).

Rep Ireland: Given - Finnan, Cunningham, Breen, Harte, McAteer (Doherty 65), Holland, Kinsella, Kilbane (Babb 86), Duff (Morrison 17), Robbie Keane.

Sep 8 - Basle

Switzerland 4 (Frei 37, H Yakin 62, P Muller 74, Chapuisat 81)

Georgia 1 (S Arveladze 62)

HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,500. **Ref:** Hrinak (Slk)

Switzerland: Stiel - Haas, M Yakin, L Magnin (Berner 82), Henchoz, Cabanas, Vogel (Celestini 68), P Muller, H Yakin (Wicky 73), Frei, Chapuisat.

Georgia: Gvaramadze - Shekiladze, Nemsadze, Kaladze, Sajaia (Burduli 46), Dzhamarauli, Tskitishvili, Kobiashvili, Kinkladze (Rekhviashvili 46; Kavelashvili 84), Demetradze, S Arveladze.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Switzerland	1	1	0	0	4	1	3
Russia	1	1	0	0	4	2	3
Albania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rep Ireland	1	0	0	1	2	4	0
Georgia	1	0	0	1	1	4	0

07.09.02.....Russia-Rep Ireland 4-2
08.09.02.....Switzerland-Georgia.....4-1
12.10.02.....Albania-Switzerland
12.10.02.....Georgia-Russia
16.10.02.....Rep Ireland-Switzerland
16.10.02.....Russia-Albania
29.03.03.....Albania-Russia
29.03.03.....Georgia-Rep Ireland
02.04.03.....Albania-Rep Ireland
02.04.03.....Georgia-Switzerland
07.06.03.....Rep Ireland-Albania
07.06.03.....Switzerland-Russia
11.06.03.....Rep Ireland-Georgia
11.06.03.....Switzerland-Albania
06.09.03.....Georgia-Albania
06.09.03.....Rep Ireland-Russia
10.09.03.....Albania-Georgia
10.09.03.....Russia-Switzerland
11.10.03.....Russia-Georgia
11.10.03.....Switzerland-Rep Ireland

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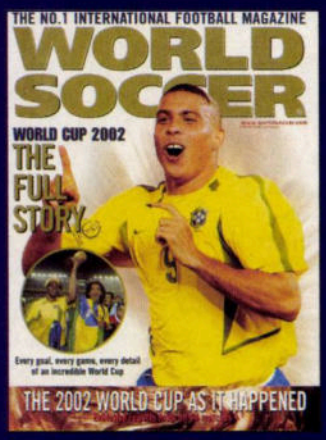

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Signed, sealed and delivered...Real Madrid officials look on as £30m Ronaldo parades the famous white shirt

On a high

With the return of Ronaldo to La Liga, the standing of Spanish football is higher than ever. Keir Radnedge reports

THE NEW season could not have begun more promisingly for Spanish football. The national team, under new boss Inaki Saez, opened their European Championship campaign with a decisive 2-0 win in Greece.

In the club world, Real Madrid sparkled in collecting the one European trophy that had so far eluded them, the Supercup; Barcelona cruised through the Champions League qualifying test against Legia Warsaw to join Valencia, Deportivo and Madrid in the first group phase; and Malaga slipped through the InterToto back door to join Celta, Betis and Alaves in the UEFA Cup.

On a domestic level Spain largely escaped the TV deal horrors visited on Italy, France and England, and Atletico Madrid are back in the Primera Liga to add a populist spark to what promises to be a dynamic title contest.

And then there was the little matter of the arrival of Ronaldo, who finally cleared all the emotional and financial hurdles courtesy – to huge irony – of a classic negotiating own goal in the frantic final hours of dealing from Barcelona. Madrid's old enemies tried to throw a last-minute spanner in the works but succeeded only in helping Real president Florentino Perez sign Ronaldo for £6 million less than he had been expecting to pay.

The Brazilian and his agents had made it clear that he wanted to leave Internazionale for Real, and the question was then whether Inter would sell or, in anger, force him to heel.

In the end Inter president Massimo Moratti realised it made financial sense to accede on this occasion to player power. Inter and Real stuttered their way through the usual on-off bartering before coming close to terms by the morning of transfer deadline day, August 31.

By now, Barça – one of Ronaldo's previous clubs – had joined the complex negotiations. They were interested in taking advantage of the situation by signing Madrid's Fernando Morientes, long admired by coach Louis Van Gaal. Real duly agreed to sell Morientes to Barcelona for £16m and to buy Ronaldo from Inter for £13m plus the Morientes fee plus £7m in December or Santiago Solari or Steve McManaman.

Going...

Inter, delighted, then pledged the Ronaldo fee to hard-up Lazio to buy Argentinian striker Hernan Crespo to replace the Brazilian.

Going...

The clock was ticking down towards the witching hour when Barcelona president Joan Gaspart pulled the plug on the Morientes deal. His reasons remain obscure. On the one hand he faced fan opposition to any gesture that would assist Madrid's purchase of Ronaldo; another factor was the contract demand of Morientes, who did not want to quit Madrid anyway. Gaspart may also have been just plain mischievous.

Perez, who has tried to cool his club's bitter relations with Barcelona ever since the Luis Figo snatch, was furious – but not as angry as Inter, who were already committed to spending the Ronaldo fee on Crespo. The air in the Inter boardroom was appropriately black and blue.

Perez, a rather more adroit businessman than some who have run Madrid, returned to the negotiating telephone with a last take-it-or-leave-it

offer. Madrid would pay £23m over five years plus £7m (or Solari or McManaman) – and Moratti was stuck with it.

Gone.

Only the details remained. In Milan, Ronaldo was driven away from Inter's angry fans in an egg and tomato-splattered police car. In Madrid, Real confirmed Ronaldo's registration with the Spanish League – meaning he was also signed just in time to qualify to play for the club in the Champions League (whenever he may be fit enough).

The following Monday he was paraded at the Bernabeu for the media and then whisked away to the privacy of Madrid's training centre. Intriguingly, the door was barred to his agents and personal spokesman. Jorge Valdano, Real's sports director, had, it appeared, heeded friendly advice to that effect from Moratti.

That same weekend the Liga launched, to the usual fanfare, with champions Valencia making a winning start in the one match moved forward to the Saturday night. Coach Rafa Benitez, fearing his players were not taking the title defence seriously enough, had halted one midweek training session in a rage because there was too much laughter. He then banished his players to the dressing rooms. Treating them like so many naughty schoolboys had its effect, however.

Valencia emerged in deadly earnest for the opening match to win 2-0 in Mallorca. The honour of the term's first goal went to Uruguayan midfielder Gonzalo De los Santos after 10 minutes. Spanish World Cup midfielder Ruben Baraja, the man of the match, volleyed the second shortly after half-time.

The initial points lead was shared by other first-weekend winners such as Malaga (3-2 at Recreativo), Celta (1-0 at Sevilla), Real Sociedad (4-2 over Bilbao in the Basque derby), Valladolid (1-0 at Santander) and, most notably, Betis (4-2 winners away to Deportivo). The promise of Deportivo's earlier decisive beating of Valencia in the Spanish Supercup evaporated, much as did president Augusto Lendoiro's boasts of what amazing stunts he would pull in the transfer market.

Madrid, having delayed their opener against Espanyol because of the European Supercup date in Monaco, cruised to a comfortable 2-0 win a day later than the rest.

Greatest curiosity was centred not on any of these matches, however, but on Atletico Madrid's long-awaited return to the top flight.

Veteran coach Luis Aragones could hardly have wished for a harder start than away to a Barcelona already match-sharp thanks to the Champions League. But luck was with him. Luis Enrique scored twice for Barça, but they also squandered a string of chances; Atletico took advantage of two of a mere three to secure a 2-2 draw in Camp Nou.

Atletico look much like a Milan old boys team, with Fabio Coloccini in defence, Demetrio Albertini in midfield and Jose Mari and Javi Moreno in the wings on this occasion. They certainly proved the tighter and more effective unit the longer the match went on and were well worth Fernando Correa's late leveller.

The match was also notable for providing the top division debut of Atletico's wonderboy forward, Fernando Torres. Not that he was able to do much more with the occasion than chase lost causes and collect a yellow card for his pains.

The League then went into cold storage while Saez, who has taken the reins from Jose Antonio Camacho, produced the Euro qualifying victory in Greece. Saez used Raul as a lone striker but has promised that he will recall Morientes to the attack for home internationals.

Morientes, of course, given Ronaldo's fitness record, is not likely to go short of match practice.

> 'Ronaldo arrived courtesy of a classic negotiating own goal by Barcelona, which only helped Real Madrid sign him for £6m less than they expected'

Q&A: Ronaldo

Happy to be here...Ronaldo faces the media in Madrid

Did you ever doubt the deal would go through?
The waiting was terrible but I was always confident [Real Madrid president] Florentino Perez would sort it out. Now I can concentrate on fulfilling a dream by playing for the greatest club in the world. You have to admire a president who dares build a team as good as any in Real Madrid's history. He is the Phenomenon, not me. Now it's down to us, the players. Our aim is to win everything in sight, and that is also my personal ambition.

You saw Madrid open their League season with a 2-0 win over Espanyol. What did you think?
I liked the technical quality of all the players, not just Figo, Zidane and Raul. I liked Guti in particular. Of course, most of the players I knew already, from having played against them. Zidane I know particularly well. When I underwent my first knee operation, in Paris, he was the first player to come and visit me in hospital.

Are you fully fit?
Obviously, I have a lot of catching up to do in terms of match fitness, and I am not going to take any risks. Then, my promise to the fans is that I will do everything I can to score as many goals as I can.

Isn't that important financially because Madrid will only pay you when you are fit?
I don't want to discuss my contract publicly, only to say it's very complicated, with a lot of clauses in it, and I will honour all of them.

Will Vicente Del Bosque suit you as coach better than Hector Cuper did at Inter?
I am sure of it. A lot of players have told me how good he is. He was an outstanding player himself, I understand. I am sure that helps.

Don't you think you have become more of an advertising board than a footballer?
I consider promotional issues only after the final whistle in any match. The priority always has to be the football. Of course, there are pressures. For instance, I have 200 autographs a day to sign if I stay at home and don't open my front door.

Fernando Morientes has kept the No 9 shirt so you have to wear No 11. Does that upset you?
It's not a problem. The No 11 was the first shirt I wore back home when I was a kid with Sao Cristovao.

On a low

Ronaldo's departure, TV rows...Paddy Agnew reports on the Italian game's ongoing crisis

Top dollar...Hernan Crespo's £23m move to Inter from Lazio made him the most expensive player bought by an Italian club this summer

FROM bad to worse. After a year marked by the third successive Italian whitewash in European club competitions, by Italy's dismal World Cup failure and by the collapse of Fiorentina, Italian football badly needed some good news this autumn.

Yet what did we get? A seasonal start delayed by rows about TV rights, and two inglorious performances by the national team in a 1-0 home defeat by Slovenia and a 2-0 Euro 2004 win away to Azerbaijan.

In one sense, there was nothing surprising about the TV rights argument. Vastly inflated and over-optimistic forecasts re pay-TV revenue had already caused the bitter winds of fiscal austerity to blow in Britain and Germany this year.

For much of the summer in Italy, state broadcaster RAI and satellite pay-TV channels Stream and Tele Piu had been sending one short, sharp, nasty message to the Serie A clubs and the Football League. Namely, the party's over, folks.

Inevitably, the message was not well received. Football League president Adriano Galliani expressed outrage that RAI offered practically half of what it had paid last year for the terrestrial TV highlights package.

Club presidents such as Gigi Corioni of Brescia and Enrico Preziosi of Como huffed and puffed at the two pay-TV channels, arguing they were entitled to a fairer share of the kitty. (The original proposals put clubs such as Juventus and Milan on pay-TV deals worth an annual £35.5million and £32m respectively, while Brescia, Como et al were expected to settle for £3m.)

Backed by Roma owner Franco Sensi, the small clubs opted to flex muscle by delaying the seasonal start, originally scheduled for September 1. In the meantime, they formed their own consortium, Plus Media Trading, with which to collectively negotiate a better deal and also form their own satellite pay-TV channel.

In the end, there could be only one all too predictable final act to this 'opera buffo'. With the help of a deus ex machina in the shape of the Milan owner and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, a series of 11th-hour deals were struck.

RAI came up with a £40m, three-year deal (last season they paid £58m) that has in-built bonuses for the Football League if viewing figures for Sunday highlights programmes and the Coppa Italia take more than a 33 per cent and 22 per cent respective share of the national TV audience. In return, RAI has been promised access to Serie A dressing-rooms as well as pitchside post-match interviews.

As for the pay-TV contracts, a logical and long-anticipated solution was found when the bigger clubs agreed to re-distribute the cake. Juventus, Inter, Milan and Roma all yielded £825,000 of their pay-TV money, while Parma and Lazio gave up £330,000. The resultant £4m will be divided among the other 12 Serie A clubs.

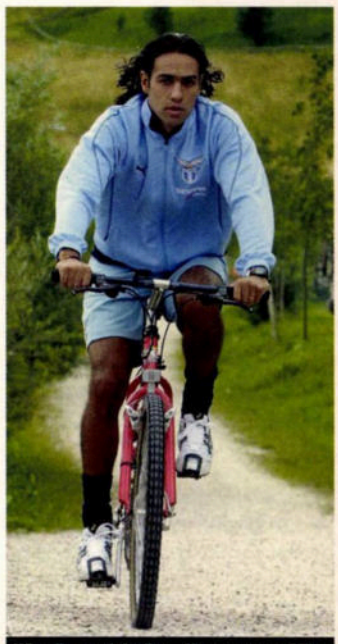
If one thing emerged clearly from all this haggling, it is that the financial foundations of Italian football are distinctly shaky and that, to a large extent, the clubs have only themselves to blame. The 18 Serie A members last year returned collective losses of more than £450m, a figure directly related to the fact that their players' wages have almost tripled in the past four years. Those wage hikes were based on the belief that income from TV rights would rise and rise.

Thus, when in the wake of the delayed seasonal start, the Football League turned to the government for help via tax breaks and stadium incentives for the clubs, not everyone was sympathetic. Northern League vice-president Roberto Calderoli probably spoke for many in the centre-right government coalition when saying: "Giving money to the clubs would be like giving drink to alcoholics."

That point was seemingly underlined when, only days after the League had declared the national game to be in crisis, there was a last-minute flurry of expensive action in the transfer market. Leading the way, as so often, were Inter, who consoled themselves for the loss of Brazilian Ronaldo by buying Argentinian Hernan Crespo from Lazio for £23m.

Milan picked up Alessandro Nesta, also from Lazio, for £20m, while in third place came Marco Di Vaio (Juventus from Parma, £17m). Other big moves were: Dutchman Clarence Seedorf (Inter to Milan, £13m), Francesco Coco (Milan to Inter, £13m), Brazilian Adriano (Inter to Parma, £10m), Daniele Bonera (Brescia to Parma, £8.5m) and Fabio Cannavaro (Parma to Inter, £7.7m).

What crisis?



Wheeling and dealing...Nesta, now at Milan

OPINION Paddy Agnew

Bye bye, Mr Nice Guy

SO, IT'S 'Goodbye, Judas' from Inter and 'Hello, Mr Phenomenon' in Madrid. In the wake of the long drawn-out Ronaldo transfer saga, one was left with the unmistakeable sensation that the mask had finally slipped on the face of the world's No 1 footballer, the so-called Mr Nice Guy of the Beautiful Game.

When Ronaldo finally left Milan to travel to Madrid for his official presentation as a Real player, he did so more in the guise of someone on an FBI witness-protection programme than as an all-conquering hero, fresh from his World Cup triumph with Brazil. It is indeed true that when he arrived at Madrid's military airport, he was received in a manner befitting a head of state, being escorted to his first stop (a restaurant) by four police motorcyclists and a squad car.

Yet, 12 hours previously, when leaving Inter's downtown headquarters, he had needed police protection from angry fans who shouted everything from "Traitor" to "Crock" (and much else less parliamentary) at him. Police advised him not to spend the night at his own San Siro penthouse flat but rather to book himself into a hotel, as a security precaution. The police had already seen angry Inter fans assault a decoy car, smashing its back window in the mistaken belief that it contained the Phenomenon himself.

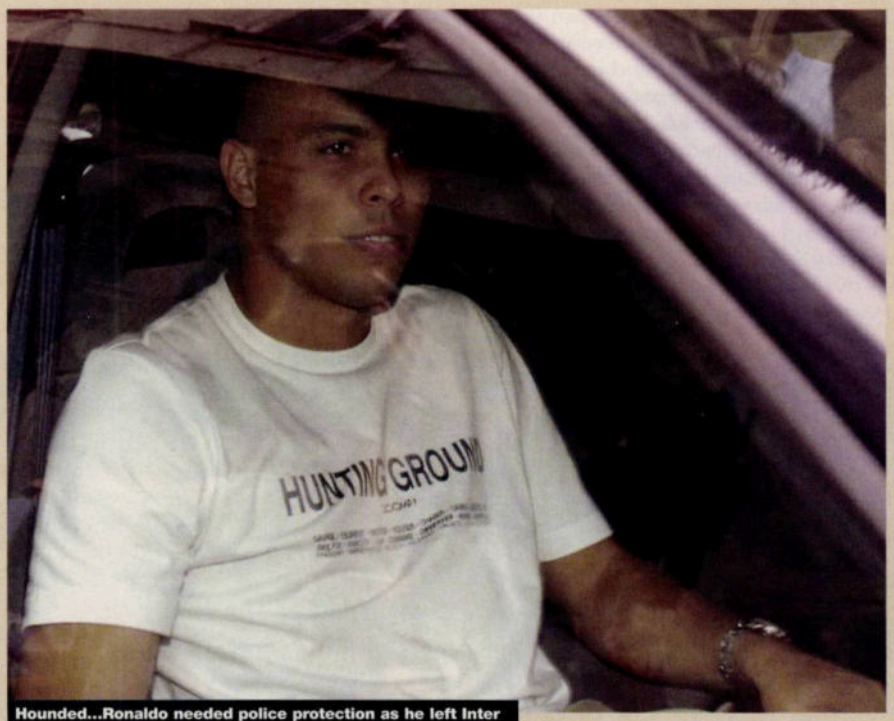
As he boarded the plane for Madrid, Ronaldo reportedly complained that he had been treated "as a Judas figure" in his last days in Milan. If he did say that, then his perception was dead right. Inter, from owner-president Massimo Moratti down to the faithful fans, have no doubt that they have been betrayed.

Lest there be any doubt, just listen to what former Inter star and club vice-president Giacinto Facchetti had to say. "We will always respect him as a player but we simply could not hold on to a player who had betrayed us like he did. We cannot regret the departure of a player who didn't want to stay at Inter and who betrayed both the fans and the club. We waited a long time for him, yet he…well you can see for yourselves what he has done."

What Ronaldo did, of course, was drop the mask of the Nice Guy, the favourite adopted son of Moratti and Inter, and make a calculated, cynical decision. He wanted out, he wanted Real Madrid, and what better moment to push for a move than in the immediate aftermath of a World Cup tournament where he had ended up as leading goalscorer.

Never mind, either, that Inter did not want to sell him, nor that Real Madrid had expressed no specific interest. In the age of player power, such matters can easily be resolved with the aid of pushy agents, talkative spokesmen and the other components of an entourage that also includes his personal trainer Nilton Petrone, his mother Mamma Sonia and his private butler-cum-chauffeur Cesar.

Ronaldo and his clan obviously reckoned that the time to move was now, while the iron was still transfer-market hot and long before, God forbid, another injury stopped him in his tracks. (By the way, Real, too, have demonstrated no small share of foot-biz cynicism by including a 'no play, no pay' clause in his contract, should he experience a recurrence of his knee problems.)



Hounded...Ronaldo needed police protection as he left Inter

All of which might seem fine and sound reasoning for a 25-year-old in a notoriously short-lived career. Yet, what happened to old-fashioned concepts such as gratitude, loyalty or dues-owed?

After nurturing and succouring Ronaldo through five highly paid and highly unproductive, injury-interrupted seasons (his salary at Inter last year was £7.4million after tax; he only managed one full season, his first, 1997-98), were not Inter and the fans entitled to feel that it was now payback time?

Last season, owner Moratti reluctantly agreed with Argentinian club coach Hector Cuper that Ronaldo's season be planned so that the injury-stricken player would hit peak fitness in May, right on the eve of the World Cup. In that context, was Moratti not entitled to comment on the day after the World Cup Final: "Well done, Ronie. Now come and win something for us."?

"Ronie", however, had something else in mind. For reasons not yet clear, he simply wanted out. Perhaps Milan had become a case of 'bad karma' for him, a town associated more with physiotherapists' couches and medical clinics than with glory on the football field.

Perhaps it may also be true, as claimed by Milan daily *Corriere Della Sera*, that Ronaldo wanted to move to Madrid because of an amorous liaison with an unnamed Swiss banker's daughter, who lives and works in the Spanish capital. We know not.

Even Moratti, speaking one week later to Rome daily *La Repubblica*, was forced to concede that "only Ronaldo knows" the reasons for his sensational move, adding, however: "I have become convinced of one thing. He made his move on the basis of a cynical calculation. At his level, to move to Real for a few bob more is simply ridiculous, not to mention the loss of his Pirelli sponsorship deal. One thing is sure, though, Ronaldo is the brains behind his clan. In the end, he decided all on his own."

The Brazilian has lost out on £1.4m from that deal with tyre giants Pirelli, while Nike are looking for compensation (perhaps up to £2.5m), given that Real Madrid are in the camp of arch-rival sportswear company Adidas. Both Pirelli and Nike have special sponsorship and endorsement deals with Inter.

The final word on the Ronaldo transfer saga must be left with Massimo Moratti: "In my opinion, he decided he was going to move on the day of the World Cup Final. He felt that he had become the King again, that he could count on limitless credit and an uncritical following. In other words, he got a swollen head. And he also forgot what he owed us."

Wolfsburg gamble on Effe

Nick Bidwell on a surprise move for the controversial former Bayern captain

A FEW months after slamming the massed ranks of the German unemployed for allegedly being happy to live off state hand-outs, former Bayern Munich skipper Stefan Effenberg very nearly found himself on the dole, too.

Effenberg, who was released by Bayern at the end of his contract in June, was subsequently linked with Premiership clubs Manchester City and Fulham, as well as Atletico Madrid, Austria Wien, Galatasaray and Besiktas. But with no deal forthcoming, the 34-year-old was rumoured to be on the verge of quitting the game. Too old, too expensive – his salary demands were reported to be £1.3million a year – too opinionated, too controversial, it seemed as if no one wanted to take a chance on 'Effe'.

However, a fortnight into the new Bundesliga season came the bombshell. Effenberg had signed a one-year deal with unfashionable top-flight side Wolfsburg. While they have never previously been known for hiring big-name players, Wolfsburg and their owners, Volkswagen, are simply not content to be a top 10 Bundesliga club. They recently revealed a plan to qualify for the Champions League within five years, and general manager Peter Pander sees Effenberg's arrival as the first step.

"In addition to his great playing ability, Stefan will bring leadership and character to our team," said Pander. "He is just what we need, and all the squad back the decision to bring him here. I don't want to hear about sceptical supporters. They want results, and we believe Stefan will help us get them."

Pander's rather defensive stance is quite understandable. Many in Germany believe Wolfsburg have taken a major risk in signing Effenberg, and not just because of his flair for stirring up trouble. For much of last season his form and fitness deserted him, and on watching Effe make his debut for Wolfsburg in a 1-0 defeat at Arminia Bielefeld, Franz Beckenbauer made it plain why Bayern had given up on him."Physically, he is already at the end," claimed Der Kaiser.

It was something of a cheap shot. Despite 14 weeks without match practice, Effenberg gave a more than respectable performance in his first game in Wolfsburg colours. His trademark drive and competitive spirit were still in evidence, as was his ability to run the midfield show.

"You know what sort of stuff is going to come out when Beckenbauer opens his mouth," retorted Effenberg after the game. "He never learns anything. Give me a couple of weeks of good training and I'll be back to full fitness.

"People can say what they like. The set-up at Wolfsburg is good, and their ideas and ambition convinced me to come. It's a great sporting challenge for me. After many years in a big city like Munich, I'm glad to have a little more peace."

He should be so lucky. The media and the paparazzi are tracking his every move, and it did not take long for Effenberg to clash with an over-enthusiastic photographer outside his new home.

A former team-mate at Bayern, Swiss midfielder Ciriaco Sforza, has also been on the move, signing up for a third spell at Kaiserslautern. But what should have been a significant event was soon to be overshadowed by the sacking of *Lauterer* boss Andy Brehme, the first Bundesliga coach this season to be fired.

Brehme had long been a hot tip for the axe. He had already started to lose control of the dressing-room last season, and after his bickering, shambolic team started this term with only one point from their opening three games, he was told to clear his desk.

Club chairman Jurgen Friedrich was not part of the decision to call time on the coach. He had always remained firm in his support for Brehme – "If Andy has the nerve to score the winning goal in the 1990 World Cup Final, he can lead us out of our troubles" – and on being outvoted, he resigned. However, it has to be added that supporter criticism and boardroom in-fighting were equally important in persuading him to walk away.

Friedrich's replacement is ex-Basle president Rene Jaggi, whose first task was to find a new coach. He eventually settled on former Club Brugge and PSV Eindhoven boss Eric Gerets, whose tough, uncompromising reputation should strike fear into the hearts of the rabble-rousers in the Kaiserslautern squad.

"I'm fair, but football is a hard business," said Gerets. "I give my all as a coach, and I want my players to be the same way. I want to see my boys motivated, disciplined and naturally successful. The team lack confidence, and that you can't buy. It has to be built up. My job is to take away some of the pressure, to make sure we don't play with fear."

In the wolf's lair...Stefan Effenberg and Wolfsburg coach Wolfgang Wolf parade the star's new shirt

Inspiration...veteran midfielder Eric Roy has boosted Nice's revival

Nice return to the top

EVEN the Nice players themselves knew that when their club went top of the League early this season it was unlikely to last. Yet at least it was a portent that the side could retain the top-division status so hard won last July, when they were given a last-ditch reprieve from being demoted to the Third Division as a result of their financial problems.

Nice have a distinguished history, however sadly wrong things may have gone. The 1950s were their glory years, winning the League four times with elegant wing-half Antoine Bonifaci at their hub. Not for 24 years had they actually topped the League.

One of the stars of the recent revival has been former Arsenal and West Ham striker Kaba Diawara, who put a long spell of injuries behind him with a burst of goals at the start of the season.

Veteran midfielder Eric Roy, previously at Rayo Vallecano in Spain, asked Nice's German coach Gernot Rohr if he could train with the club in the summer. Rohr agreed and quickly saw he could profit from Roy's experience. Like the rest of the Nice players, Roy's salary is relatively low, but by way of compensation, as Rohr points out, many of them have "revenge to take", having been cast out by their previous clubs.

Captain and sweeper, Jose Cobos, by contrast, was at the club last season, but little considered by the then management and destined to be released. He has stayed, however, and is flourishing.

For Roy, returning to the city of his birth, the right start has been a particular delight. The team know, he says, their qualities, they are all fighting for one another. "It's that will that makes the strength of the little teams. We are in a good period that won't last so we must surf the crest of this wave."

When it came to their first major test, away to Paris Saint-Germain, they passed it bravely, forcing a 1-1 draw.

Ajaccio, another of this season's newcomers, also know life at the top will not be easy. But they, too, battle on, as an early 1-0 home win over Sedan demonstrated. Only 6,000 fans watched that game, giving some idea of what the Corsican club is up against. Years out of the top flight, after seasons in which they held their own, have diminished local fervour.

Strasbourg have released volatile Paraguay goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert, alleging he is overweight and indisciplined. At least Chilavert was ready to go down with the ship when Strasbourg were relegated.

Coach Christian Gourcuff, who was sacked by Rennes at the end of last season, has found a new billet in Qatar with champions Al Ittihad.

Andre Duclos

Pro-file Olivier Kapo

Auxerre free spirit now in the frame with France

NEW France coach Jacques Santini could not wait to include young Auxerre forward or midfielder Olivier Kapo in his side. Although Kapo had only just returned to the Auxerre first team after four months out with damaged ankle ligaments, Santini had no hesitation in calling up the 21-year-old for the Euro 2004 qualifier against Cyprus. Kapo made his debut as a late substitute in the 2-1 victory in Nicosia.

Some three decades earlier, his father George had played football for the Ivory Coast; now Olivier too was an international. "To tell the truth, I was surprised to be in the squad, let alone to play my first game for France with Zidane, Desailly, Wiltord and all the other stars," says Kapo, who was born in the Ivory Coast capital of Abidjan but moved to the Paris region with his family at the age of 10. "Not so long ago, my only aim was to be a regular for the Under-21s and help them win the European title. Unfortunately, I was badly injured towards the end of last season and could not go to Switzerland for the finals.

"I have played with many of the senior squad at Under-21 level, and that's a big help in terms of settling in. What's important is that I don't forget what a fantastic opportunity has been given to me."

For over a year now, the spectacular work of striker Djibril Cisse has left everybody else at Auxerre somewhat in the shade. However, Kapo is now emerging as an excellent player in his own right, skilful enough to ease himself out of the tightest spots, creative, full of stamina and immensely versatile. Since a successful trial at Auxerre in 1993, Kapo has been used as a left-winger, as a left-sided midfielder and even as a striker. But, as Auxerre boss Guy Roux has come to recognise, he is at his most effective when given a wide-ranging brief on the shoulder of a lone front-runner. Kapo is Auxerre's attacking free spirit. One moment a winger, the next a playmaker, and if Cisse pulls out wide, Kapo takes his place at the point of the attack.

He does have to work on certain facets of his game. An attacking player with his ability should average more than four goals a season, while his Under-21 coach, Raymond Domenech, says his mind can wander. "Sometimes the match continues, but he is elsewhere," declared Domenech. "However, he quickly snaps out of it. Much more relevant is that he is the ideal link between midfield and attack. He has this great endurance, works very hard and has exceptional technical qualities. He created more League goals than anyone else last season and fully deserves his chance in the national team."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Auxerre
Country France
Born September 27, 1980, in Abidjan, Ivory Coast
Previous clubs ASEC Abidjan (IvC), Africa Sports (IvC), Choisy Le Roi
International debut September 2002, v Cyprus
International caps 1 (0 goals)

Red mist...Ferguson and Sunderland's Quinn get involved as Keane is dismissed for elbowing McAteer

Keane stirs it up

The Manchester United captain has been in the spotlight for misdemeanours on and off the pitch. Gavin Hamilton reports

ALMOST inevitably, Manchester United hogged the headlines at the start of the new season. Alex Ferguson's defence of his captain Roy Keane's on- and off-pitch misdemeanours was true to form, but attracted criticism nonetheless. Keane was charged by the FA for bringing the game into disrepute for comments made in his widely publicised autobiography.

United have since banned their players from such publishing exercises. But the real problem lies with book publishers, who have to recoup their expensive advances to players and their ghostwriters with more and more outlandish newspaper serialisations. Hence the claims by Keane that he deliberately set out to injure Manchester City defender Alf-Inge Haaland in April 2001.

Ferguson backed Keane over his autobiography, saying: "I don't think there is anything wrong with the book whatsoever." He was similarly sympathetic when Keane was sent off in United's game at Sunderland for elbowing Jason McAteer. Keane has now effectively gone to ground while the FA and United's lawyers do battle. He will be out of action until Christmas after undergoing hip surgery.

United's injury worries were compounded by the loss of Paul Scholes for at least six weeks following knee surgery. He joined long-term casualty Wes Brown on the sidelines.

Scholes's surgery at least gave Ferguson some sense of vindication for pulling the midfielder out of England's friendly match against Portugal. The United manager reopened the club v country debate when he withdrew Scholes, and David Beckham, only to play them against Middlesbrough four days before the international.

The 1-1 draw with Portugal at Villa Park featured a ridiculous number of substitutes – 40 players were used – nullifying any potential benefits in terms of experimentation. However, Leeds striker Alan Smith, who scored England's goal on his full debut, did show he has sufficient talent to be a long-term international partner for Michael Owen.

But criticism of coach Sven Goran Eriksson is growing. He is now at the crossroads in terms of relations with the press. The Swede has yet to convince his critics that he has a clear tactical vision for the side. At the World Cup, England were almost Italian in their determination to defend a one-goal lead. But in the game when they went a goal down, against Brazil, they appeared directionless, and Eriksson offered little leadership with his use of substitutes.

What will be interesting over the coming months will be to see how Eriksson makes use of a growing band of talented young players, such as Joe Cole and David Dunn, who were both given brief cameos against Portugal.

Tottenham were the surprise early leaders of the Premiership. Their achievement is worth recording at this point in the season because they were quickly overtaken by champions Arsenal. Spurs manager Glenn Hoddle finally landed a striker on transfer deadline day when Robbie Keane was signed from Leeds for £7million. But old habits die hard. After going 2-0 up away to Fulham, Spurs conceded three second-half goals to miss out on the chance of leapfrogging Arsenal back to the top.

Sunderland were the most active club as the Premier League's first transfer window closed. They signed Tore Andre Flo (Rangers) and Marcus Stewart (Ipswich). Other deals included Valladolid keeper Ricardo (to Man Utd) and Oyvind Leonhardsen and Ronny Johnsen (to Aston Villa).

SCOTLAND

Celtic fall off gravy train

CELTIC'S hopes of making an impact in the Champions League were dashed when they lost to Switzerland's Basle on away goals in the third qualifying round.

The Parkhead side's elimination was a major blow, both in a financial and a footballing sense. The club miss out on the huge cash benefits that would have resulted from qualification to the group stages, while manager Martin O'Neill is left with only the bread and butter of domestic competition and the considerably less enticing prospect of participation in the UEFA Cup to dwell on.

Celtic have dominated Scottish football since O'Neill's arrival two seasons ago, and although the mainstream support is still there, it is evident that the fans are looking for something more appetising than the rather predictable fare that is placed in front of them on the home front.

Meanwhile, players like Paul Lambert and Henrik Larsson are looking jaded and often appear to lack motivation.

Elsewhere in European competition, there were narrow wins for UEFA Cup debutants Livingston, who somewhat fortuitously overcame Vaduz of Liechtenstein, and Aberdeen, against Moldova's Nistru Otaci.

Alan Fairley

WALES

FA criticised after Euro whitewash

UEFA Cup representatives Bangor City and TNS Llansantfraid both exited at the first hurdle, completing a whitewash for Welsh clubs after Barry's early departure from the Champions League.

At least Bangor put up a gallant performance against Sartid of Yugoslavia, winning the home leg 1-0 before succumbing 2-0 away. It was a different story for TNS, who were thrashed in both ties against Amica Wronki of Poland to go down 12-2 on aggregate.

Welsh clubs' lack of progress in Europe has led to criticism of the FA for not offering enough assistance in

preparing for such games. Many observers feel the governing body should do more by offering clubs the services of the national team's technical staff.

As the domestic season got under way, champions Barry Town took their familiar place at the top, though the next two sides, both from Port Talbot, were surprises: Port Talbot Town and Afan Lido.

The national team achieved another impressive result when drawing 1-1 away to Croatia in their August friendly.

Mel Thomas

N IRELAND

Lennon quits after death threat

NEIL LENNON has announced his retirement from international football after he was forced to withdraw from Northern Ireland's friendly against Cyprus in Belfast in August following a telephoned death threat.

The midfielder, who had been appointed captain for the game, received the threat shortly before kick-off.

Lennon, a Catholic, has been the target of sectarian abuse in the past because he plays for Scottish champions Celtic, who have Catholic connections.

Irish FA president Jim Boyce described the phone call as being from a "moronic individual" – a sentiment shared by all local football supporters. The game itself ended in a disappointing 0-0 draw.

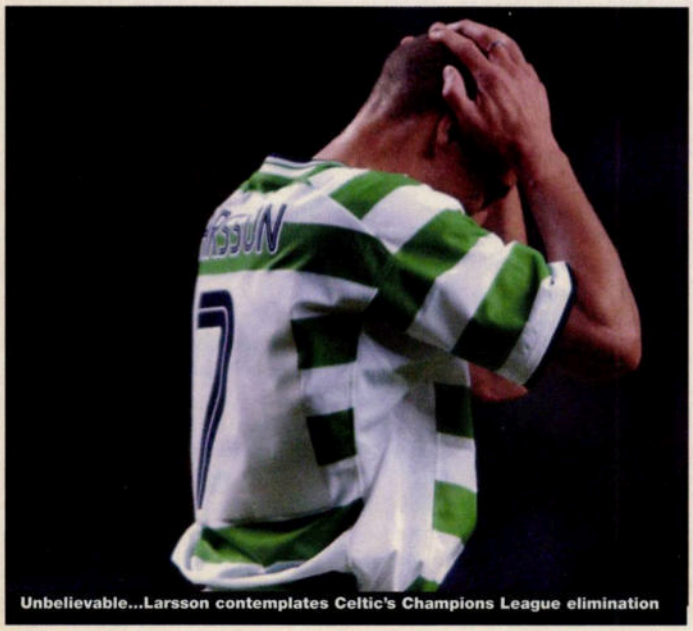
Alan Dornan replaced Gary McCartney as player-manager of struggling Crusaders just before the start of the season. However, the tough-as-teak 40-year-old full-back looks to have his work cut out as his side face what may well be another grim fight against relegation. After four games, the Crues had taken just two points.

There is a brighter picture for Glentoran, who won both their first two games and have added former Northern Ireland international midfielder Michael O'Neill to their squad. The 33-year-old, who played for Newcastle United, Dundee United and Hibernian, has added a new dimension to the East Belfast side's play.

Glentoran went down 6-0 on aggregate to Wisla Krakow in the UEFA Cup, but the scoreline would have been even more emphatic if it had not been for young goalkeeper Elliott Morris, who made a series of top-drawer saves.

Linfield have struggled to find early form in the League and suffered a shock defeat when going down 1-0 away to League newcomers Institute of Londonderry. Like Glentoran, Linfield were dumped out of the UEFA Cup at the first attempt, losing 5-1 on aggregate to Stabaek of Norway.

Roy Kitson



Unbelievable...Larsson contemplates Celtic's Champions League elimination

Deadline day transfers

NAME	POS	FROM	TO
Roberto BARONIO	M	Lazio	Perugia
Fredi BOBIC	F	Borussia Dortmund	Hannover 96
Mariano BOMBARDA	F	Willem II	Feyenoord
Matteo BRIGHI	M	Juventus	Parma
Fabian CARINI	G	Juventus	Standard Liege
Cosmin CONTRA	D	Milan	Atletico Madrid
Bernardo CORRADI	F	Internazionale	Lazio
Hernan CRESPO	F	Lazio	Internazionale
Ivan DE LA PENA	M	Lazio	Espanyol
Marco DI VAIO	F	Parma	Juventus
DJALMINHA	M	Deportivo La Coruna	Austria Wien
Tore Andre FLO	F	Rangers	Sunderland
Frankie HEJDUK	D	Bayer Leverkusen	St Gallen
IVAN CAMPO	D	Real Madrid	Bolton
Ronny JOHNSEN	D	Manchester United	Aston Villa
JULIO CESAR	D	Real Madrid	Austria Wien
Robbie KEANE	F	Leeds	Tottenham
Dmitri KHLESTOV	D	Besiktas	Moscow Spartak
Lilian LASLANDES	F	Sunderland	Bastia
Oyvind LEONHARDSEN	M	Tottenham	Aston Villa
Teddy LUCIC	D	AIK Stockholm	Leeds
Albert LUQUE	F	Mallorca	Deportivo La Coruna
Johan MICOUD	M	Parma	Werder Bremen
Adrian MUTU	F	Verona	Parma
Alessandro NESTA	D	Lazio	Milan
Nicolas OLIVEIRA	F	Sevilla	Valladolid
Victor ONOPKO	D	Oviedo	Rayo Vallecano
Walter PANDIANI	F	Deportivo La Coruna	Mallorca
Nando RAFAEL	F	Ajax	Hertha Berlin
David REGIS	D	Metz	Troyes
RICARDO Lopez	G	Valladolid	Manchester United
Carlos ROA	G	Mallorca	Albacete
RONALDO	F	Internazionale	Real Madrid
SAVIO	F	Real Madrid	Bordeaux
Marcus STEWART	F	Ipswich	Sunderland
TURU FLORES	F	Deportivo La Coruna	Mallorca

Death threats cast sinister shadow

Klaas-Jan Droppert on a disturbing trend in the domestic game

HOLLAND

A SPATE of death threats to senior figures in the Dutch game has cast a shadow over the opening weeks of the new season. PSV coach Guus Hiddink and Feyenoord's Bert Van Marwijk both received threats, and though they have continued in their posts, they have been forced to step up their personal security.

The threats came in the wake of Sparta coach Frank Rijkaard receiving a bullet through the post earlier in the summer. Meanwhile, NAC Breda director Roelant Oltmans has stepped down after angry fans staged an intimidating protest outside his house. They blame Oltmans for the club's financial crisis.

Dutch FA chairman Henk Kesler was the latest to receive death threats after declaring that PSV should be sanctioned for delaying the Super Cup match against Ajax. This started an hour and a quarter late because PSV supporters had locked in the players at the club's training ground. Fans were angry about the decision that they could travel to the Amsterdam ArenA only by train, as ordered by the city's mayor to prevent crowd trouble.

Moment of glory...Rafael Van der Vaart lifts the Super Cup trophy

The match itself showed that coach Hiddink still has a lot to do. Although Mateja Kezman gave the Eindhoven club the lead, it was Ajax that dominated. The outstanding Rafael Van der Vaart scored twice, and Ahmed Hossam got the other in the reigning champions' 3-1 win.

The national team were unconvincing winners of their final friendly before the Euro 2004 qualifiers got under way. Against Norway, substitute Edgar Davids, used as a left-winger, scored the only goal of the game. Coach Dick Advocaat stuck to his naive 4-3-3 system, which involves using Patrick Kluivert as a midfielder instead of playing him as Ruud Van Nistelrooy's strike partner.

Finally, former Barcelona and Feyenoord player Igor Korneyev has agreed to play for NAC...for free. The Breda club cannot afford to pay his salary, but the Russian, without a club at the moment, has still decided to sign up.

Back to Brazil...Jardel has gone home

PORTUGAL

Jardel quits Sporting for Brazil

MARIO JARDEL, refused permission to join Betis in Spain by Sporting Lisbon, has returned to his native Brazil.

The forward, Europe's golden shoe winner with 42 goals last season, has not played for Sporting during the current campaign citing depression as the cause. He previously stated he could no longer play in Portugal because he was not in the right psychological condition after separating from his wife.

After Sporting turned down his move to Betis, Jardel travelled to the Brazilian city of Fortaleza to be near his two children, who have been staying there with his wife.

The forward, still with two years to run on his Sporting contract, is expected to stay in Brazil until the European transfer window reopens in January in the hope that the Lisbon club will listen to offers.

Without Jardel, Sporting failed to reach the Champions League group stages, eliminated 2-0 on aggregate by Internazionale in the third qualifying round. Boavista's exit at the same stage, to Auxerre 1-0, meant that Portugal were without a representative in the group phase for the first time since the league format was introduced in 1992-93.

Alberto da Silva

BELGIUM

RWDM RIP

THE saga of RWD Molenbeek's battle for a lifeline finally ended when the deadline passed for the Brussels club to repay debts of £20million. Already demoted to the Third Division after being refused a licence, RWDM were not even allowed to take their place among the lower ranks of Belgian football by the federation because of the extent of their financial plight.

A rescue package promised by former player Johan Vermeersch had given the club belated hope of salvation but, in reality, all Vermeersch could do was pay off the £30,000 owed to the federation.

RWDM were never a major force in Belgian football, although they did win the League title in 1975. Even so, their place among the elite was taken for granted until their recent economic crisis.

When RWDM ended three seasons in the Second Division by winning promotion 17 months ago, it was thought their troubles were behind them. But it was not to be, and the debts continued to pile up.

As the club's unwieldy name suggests, they were a product of not one merger but two. The first brought together Daring Molenbeek and Racing Brussels, whose home had been an athletics stadium two miles away. The second, in 1973, was the fusion of Daring Molenbeek and Racing White, who had played on the other side of town. And so Racing White Daring Molenbeek came to be formed.

But as ever in the merger-ridden world of Belgian football, all is not quite lost. Once the debt issue has been resolved, the club could be back in some shape or form, maybe even this season. There is talk already of a fusion with Second Division Strombeek, who may be willing to drop down a division in return for being allowed to move from their own modest home at De Singel into RWDM's far more spacious Edmond Machtensstadion.

All of which put the beginning of the season into the shade. Club Brugge got off to their usual irresistible start, winning their first four games. Meanwhile, Standard Liege, who were expected to provide

a formidable challenge under former national team coach Robert Waseige, were in fact propping up the table with just a single point to their name.

Nicholas Harling

● The **LUXEMBOURG** national team showed signs of improvement despite the 2-0 defeat by Morocco in their August friendly, *writes Tim Brice*. However, in their next friendly, against Israel, they were thumped 5-0. The only bright point was the promising debut of Claudio Da Luz.

SWITZERLAND

Zaugg gains his revenge

COACH Hans-Peter Zaugg gained sweet revenge on his former club Grasshopper, when his lowly Lucerne side won 1-0 at home to end the visitors' six-game winning run.

Zaugg had been denied a dignified departure from Grasshopper last season after being forced to give way to new boss Marcel Koller with six months of his contract still to run.

Lucerne went one better in their next game when they visited Basle.

Racism accusation...Blaise N'Kufo

The champions were leading 2-1 but the visitors scored twice in the last five minutes to record a shock 3-2 win. Basle's much-feared hooligan element promptly ran amok, and the police were forced to use water cannons and fire rubber bullets to restore order.

Another home defeat for Basle, this time 4-2 by Thun, allowed Grasshopper to increase their lead at the top to nine points. However, this was reduced to six when Basle, now through to the Champions League group stage, beat the leaders 3-2 in Zurich next time out.

National coach Kobi Kuhn's desperate need for a striker prompted him to recall veteran Stephane Chapuisat for the recent friendly against Austria. Chapuisat didn't score but Switzerland did win 3-2.

Hannover 96 forward Blaise N'Kufo caused a stir by walking out of the squad hotel claiming racial discrimination when he saw he was not on the team sheet to face Austria.

Ivar von Rulach

REP OF IRELAND

Goals going in for O'Flynn

IN A top division dominated by Dublin sides – six of the 10 clubs are from the greater Dublin area – Cork City are proudly flying the provincial flag.

Cork were vying for the leadership with Bohemians after seven rounds, helped in no small part by the form of John O'Flynn. The 20-year-old, who came home from Peterborough during the summer, has been banging in the goals for the Leesiders and picked up the season's first player of the month award.

In the FAI Cup, Bohemians and Bray Wanders were remarkably drawn against each other for the fourth season running.

Andrew Bonner, son of the former Ireland keeper Packie Bonner, made his debut for the Irish Under-18s in a tournament in the Czech Republic. Andrew, who plays for Queen's Park in Scotland, is a striker.

Sean Creedon

LIECHTENSTEIN

Referee blows it for Vaduz

VADUZ were seconds away from causing a major upset in their UEFA Cup tie against Livingston of Scotland. Following a 1-1 draw in Liechtenstein in the first leg and with the score 0-0 in the return, Vaduz's Marius Zarn volleyed home in injury time for what would have been a historic victory. However, Croat referee Ivan Novak had blown for full time as the ball crossed the line and disallowed the goal.

The national team disappointingly lost their friendly away to the Faroe Islands in August, going down 3-1 having led 1-0 with 20 minutes left.

Graeme Crawford

Pro-file Ricardo Cabanas

Young Swiss midfielder on a roll with Grasshopper

AS A teenager, Grasshopper midfield talent Ricardo Cabanas was confronted with a dilemma. Should he play for his country of birth, Switzerland, or the land of his parents, Spain?

"Of course, I was flattered when I was contacted by the Spanish federation and asked if I wanted to play for their youth team," recalls the 23-year-old. "Even so, I said no. I was born and brought up in Switzerland, have benefited from a Swiss education and basically am a Swiss player.

I joined Grasshopper as a kid and worked my way through to the first team.

"Things have turned out well for me as a Swiss international, and I know I made the right choice."

Those responsible for the well-being of Swiss soccer can only be glad he nailed his colours to their mast. While they currently have a host of fine young prospects, including midfielder Ludovic Magnin (Werder Bremen) and forward Alex Frei (Servette), there can be little doubt that Cabanas is the pick of an exciting generation.

The Grasshopper man certainly had much to do with the Under-21s' progress to the last four of this summer's European Championship, skippering the side with much intelligence and authority, and demonstrating his incisive approach work in central or on the right of midfield.

"We know Cabanas is the player we have to focus on stopping," said Italy Under-21 coach Claudio Gentile before his team's goalless draw with the Swiss at the finals. "He's a danger both inside and outside the box. He is strong on the ball, quick and purposeful, and we must be aware of his ability from free-kicks."

A bright future as a full international awaits, and Switzerland coach Kobi Kuhn handed him a starting role in recent games against Austria and Georgia.

Given his ability and the added attraction that he will be available on a free transfer next summer, it is almost certain that Cabanas will soon quit Grasshopper for a club in a major European league. However, Cabanas responds to all the transfer talk with the maturity of someone who already spends a portion of his spare time coaching juniors at Grasshopper. "I don't want to move abroad just for the sake of it," he says. " The team I move to has to have good prospects. But I also know my limits and need to be realistic. Any move will happen in its own time. First of all, I want to concentrate on winning more trophies with Grasshopper. We felt bad after losing out to Basle in both the Swiss League and Cup last season and we aim to turn the tables."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Grasshopper
Country Switzerland
Born January 17, 1979, in Zurich
Previous club Juventus Zurich
International debut August 2000, v Greece
International caps 6 (1 goal)
Honours Swiss League 1998, 2001

Cratz sacked – for being popular!

Pentti Hietanen on how the Helsingborgs boss paid the price after visiting his former club

SWEDEN

IT IS nice to be adored by the home fans – but not if you are coach of the visiting team! Soren Cratz learned this the hard way when he was sacked by Helsingborgs shortly after their visit to Stockholm to meet Hammarby, whom Cratz guided to their first League championship last year.

Cratz clearly enjoyed his return to the Soderstadion, but the way he milked the applause from the Hammarby fans did not go down well with Helsingborgs' directors.

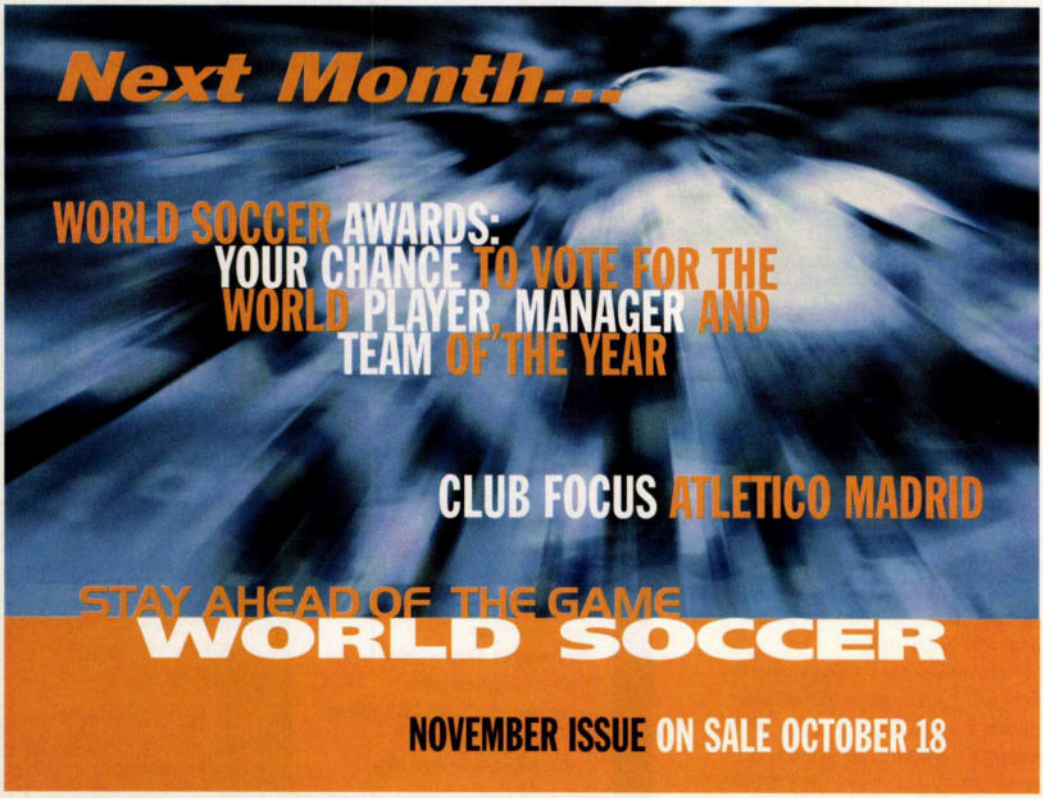
A couple of days later they showed him the door, claiming Cratz had failed to win his players' respect, and replaced him with Peter Swardh.

True, Helsingborgs have been a disappointment in the League. However, Cratz could point to injuries to key players as well as the club's decision to sell forward Rade Prica to Hansa Rostock.

IFK Gothenburg have also changed coach, Stefan Lundin making way for Roger Gustafsson, who led the club during their heady days in the 1990s.

Lundin failed to keep IFK's championship hopes alive with only one win in six matches, and they were also knocked out of the UEFA Cup by modest Moldovans Zimbru Chisinau.

Smiling through...but Cratz's acclaim at Hammarby annoyed Helsingborgs



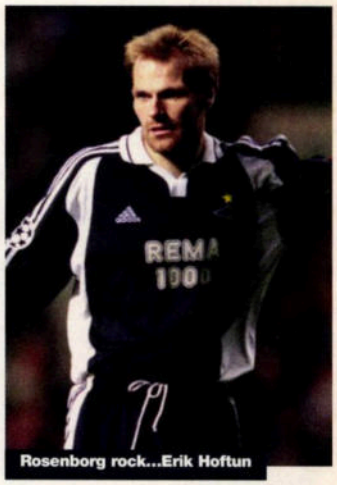
NORWAY

Rosenborg close in

WITH five rounds of the League remaining, perennial champions Rosenborg were in top gear, three points clear of Lyn on the back of a seven-game winning run.

The goals of Harald Brattbakk and Frode Johnsen, and the strong defensive performances of captain Erik Hoftun, now recalled to the national squad, helped the Trondheim club recover from being 10 points off the pace to become favourites to lift their 11th consecutive title.

Sogndal have been the surprise package of the second part of the season. At the halfway stage there seemed to be nothing that could prevent them from going down. However, the club bought a couple of central defenders – Canadian Marco Reda and Ivorian Raoul Kouakou – and took on Harald Aabrekk as assistant coach. Five wins in seven matches later, they had climbed to the relative safety of mid-table.


Rosenborg rock...Erik Hoftun

Relegation-threatened Moss have parted company with coach Erik Brakstad, defender Rune Tangen stepping in as caretaker.

Brann have also had a torrid time, losing seven straight League games and going out of the UEFA Cup 6-4 on aggregate to Suduva of Lithuania. They were also knocked out of the domestic Cup by Second Division Aalesund, now into the semi-finals.

Sigurd Odegaard

DENMARK

Silberbauer shines as Brondby buckle

MICHAEL SILBERBAUER enjoyed a memorable month, inspiring AaB Aalborg to race ahead in the Superliga after winning his first international cap in Denmark's 1-0 friendly victory against Scotland.

The 21-year-old midfielder made his debut as a substitute and looked immediately at home, albeit against a weak Scottish side. But it only confirmed the growing promise of Silberbauer, who scored his third goal in five games to give AaB a 2-2 draw away to Viborg. The Aalborg club then went top of the table by crushing early pacesetters FC Copenhagen 3-0.

Champions Brondby, meanwhile, were in a dismal eighth place after a disastrous run of results under new coach Michael Laudrup, who admits he has found the switch to management tougher than expected.

The club have fared no better in the Champions League, outplayed home and away by Norwegian rivals Rosenborg. A 1-0 defeat in Trondheim was a reasonable result, but Brondby went 3-0 down back in their own stadium before two goals in the last 10 minutes gave the score a semblance of respectability.

Laudrup has kept faith with an ultra-attacking strategy, but while his strikers keep missing good chances, the team's style means they are always likely to concede goals.

Accusations of tactical naivety are being aired in the Danish media, and already some in the Brondby crowd are beginning to turn. A 1-1 draw at home to Esbjerg prompted a storm of whistles from the 11,000 fans. The brief honeymoon period is definitely over for Denmark's most famous and elegant footballer.

Jim Holden

FINLAND

Knives out for Armstrong

HJK HELSINKI set the standard in the League, with five consecutive wins putting them five points clear. However, the knives were out when they were sent packing from the UEFA Cup by Belorussians Gomel.

HJK were torn apart by their little-known opponents, who showed not only better teamwork but were also more skilful and mobile on the way to a 5-0 aggregate victory.

The critics slammed HJK coach Keith Armstrong, who is on his way to winning his fourth League title in five seasons but who has done very little in European matches.

Armstrong countered by saying: "It is impossible to build a team capable of European success in Finland. If HJK or FC Haka win the League, the best players will almost automatically disappear abroad."

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

Tense finale in view

WITH two rounds remaining, only a point separated Fylkir and KR at the top of the table, while six teams were still in with a chance of taking the two relegation places.

As the nerves began to show, IBV's Njall Eidsson became the season's first coaching casualty. The timing of his sacking, with three games to play, seemed strange, given that his club were locked in the relegation dogfight and facing a Cup semi-final.

The championship run-in has diverted attention from the fact that, for the second year running, Iceland's involvement in European club competition was over before the end of August. Following IA's exit from the Champions League in the first qualifying round, the two UEFA Cup representatives also fell at the first hurdle – IBV losing 5-1 on aggregate to AIK Stockholm and Fylkir 4-2 to Excelsior Mouscron.

Iceland beat Andorra 3-0 in Reykjavik in a strong contender for the most meaningless international of recent times. The visitors' brand of kick and rush football – kick your opponent and rush to the referee protesting injured innocence – meant a sorry saga of niggling, time-wasting and very little football.

However, it was a day to remember for Lillestrom forward Rikhardur Dadason, whose double made him Iceland's second highest scorer with 14 goals in 41 internationals. He is on course to eclipse his grandfather Rikhardur Jonsson, who hit 17 in 33 games between 1947 and 1965.

Rab Christie

Pro-file Christian Wilhelmsson

Young Swede giving his all for Stabaek of Norway

MIDFIELDERS from Norwegian side Stabaek are clearly in demand. Nine months after Norway's Tommy Svindal Larsen and Swedish international Tobias Linderoth were lured away by Nurnberg and Everton respectively, another Swede, Christian Wilhelmsson, is expected to follow suit in the near future.

The 22-year-old has attracted the attention of clubs in England, Belgium, Holland and Italy, from where Internazionale and Bologna lead the chase.

Stabaek director Ingebrigt Steen Jensen acknowledges that economics make it probable that Wilhelmsson, who signed for Stabaek from Swedish Second Division side Mjallby in 2000, will go to a major European league sooner rather than later.

"Christian is the best player in the Norwegian League at the moment," says Jensen. "I'm sure he will be our next big export."

The blond midfielder's dynamism, neat passing and competitive spirit have driven Stabaek this season, and he certainly has not shown any sign of nerves in his club's most important games. For example, when Stabaek thrashed League leaders Lyn Oslo in May, Wilhelmsson was in the thick of the action throughout, grafting, pushing forward and scoring a neatly taken fourth goal.

"There's no question of not being flattered by people from Inter and Bologna turning up to watch me," he says. "But the most important matter for me has to be Stabaek. We're battling for the League title, and with Lyn, Rosenborg and us in a close fight, that has to be the priority."

While Wilhelmsson has a fine relationship with Stabaek coach Gaute Larsen, the most important influence on him was undoubtedly Larsen's predecessor, Swede Anders Linderoth. Linderoth, who had retained strong links with Mjallby, his former club, received word of the teenage Wilhelmsson's mature displays. He took a look, liked what he saw and signed him for Stabaek early in 2000.

Since joining the Norwegian side, Wilhelmsson has become much more adept technically and tactically. Indeed, so much has he improved that many consider him ready for a full Swedish debut as national coaches Tommy Soderberg and Lars Lagerback look to rebuild after the World Cup.

"I've had a good grounding with the Under-21s and it's nice to hear people say they think I have the ability to play for Sweden's seniors," declares Wilhelmsson. "It shows my form is good. I hope to have a chance at that level now the World Cup has gone."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Stabaek (Nor)
Country Sweden
Born December 8, 1979, in Malmo
Previous club Mjallby

Panathinaikos make worst ever start

Lou Economopoulos on an early crisis at the Athens club

GREECE

PANATHINAIKOS made their worst ever start to a season when losing their first two League games to go second bottom of the table.

The Athenians, who reached the quarter-finals of last season's Champions League, were labelled "a team of confusion" by new coach Fernando Santos. "Over the past few years, Panathinaikos have got into the habit of waiting for their opponents to take action, but I prefer us to apply the pressure. It seems some players have not got used to this system," explained the Portuguese, who took over from Sergio Markarian during the summer.

The poor early results – a 4-1 defeat at PAOK Salonika and 1-0 loss at home to newly promoted Proodeftiki – led to attacks by supporters on players' property and the club's Apostolos Nikolaidis stadium. Ironically, the fans were not allowed to attend the first two matches. They were banned from travelling to Thessaloniki for fear of trouble between the two sets of fans, while the Proodeftiki game was played behind closed doors, a penalty for violence at a match last season.

Aris Stathopoulos, the vice-president of the Greek Soccer Federation (EPO) suffered three broken ribs and head injuries after being attacked by two men outside the EPO offices in Athens in late August. Police believe that the assailants, who escaped, may have been the same men who beat up another EPO official, Thanassis Papayiannis, outside the same offices a year ago.

Grim-faced...Fernando Santos saw his Panathinaikos side lose twice

Let-off...Ilhan escaped sanction

TURKEY

Besiktas at eye of the storm

CONTROVERSIAL refereeing decisions played a part in all of Besiktas' first three matches of the season.

The UEFA Cup representatives branded official Metin Tokat a "thief" after they felt he had denied them victory in the opening day game away to Bursaspor. The tie ended 2-2.

Next time out, at home against Kocaelispor, it was the visitors who felt hard done by. With the score at 1-1 after 90 minutes, referee Unsal Cimen called for three minutes of stoppage time. However, Besiktas striker Ahmet Dursun scored the match-winner in the 95th minute and from an offside position.

The third bout of controversy came away to Istanbulspor. Pascal Nouma, recently re-signed by Besiktas, was sent off only four minutes after appearing as a substitute. The visiting fans reacted by hurling bottles and other missiles on to the pitch.

National coach Senol Gunes has spoken out angrily against the FA's decision not to sanction Besiktas striker Ilhan Mansiz for failing to attend a training camp prior to the recent friendly against Georgia. "Other players who have been banned for five matches want to know why Ilhan wasn't," said Gunes.

In the game itself, Turkey beat Georgia 3-0 in Trabzon.

Fenerbahce dropped into the UEFA Cup after being eliminated from the Champions League by Feyenoord, 3-0 on aggregate.

Hasan Cemali

YUGOSLAVIA

President Stojkovic sounds corruption warning

THE new domestic season got under way with a warning from FA president Dragan Stojkovic that the football authorities would be coming down hard on any malpractices they discovered. It has been an open secret for some time that the game in Yugoslavia is blighted by match-fixing and corruption.

"I think the clubs have got my message. If we find proof of any dirty dealing, the sanctions will be severe," Stojkovic stated.

On the pitch, title holders Partizan underlined their status as favourites for this season by winning all their first four matches, although the performances of Sasa Ilic and co were far from impressive.

Meanwhile, the national team beat Bosnia-Herzegovina 2-0 in Sarajevo in August, but were then thrashed 5-0 by the Czech Republic in another friendly.

Partizan Belgrade were sent crashing out of the Champions League by Bayern Munich, who won 6-1 on aggregate. In the UEFA Cup, Red Star reached the first round by beating Kazakhs Kairat Almaty 5-0 on aggregate. Sartid Smederevo also made it through, though they struggled to eliminate Bangor City of Wales, winning only 2-1.

Vladimir Novak

CROATIA

Olic joins Dinamo

THE country's top striker, Ivica Olic, has joined Dinamo Zagreb from champions Zagreb after failing to attract a good offer from a top foreign club. The young forward, one of the few Croatians to boost his reputation at the World Cup, was League top scorer last season, hitting 21 goals for Zagreb, who he had joined on loan from Marsonia.

Zdravko Reic

SLOVENIA

Win over Italy restores faith

THE national team's shock 1-0 win over Italy in Trieste in August has helped restore the supporters' faith in the team following the poor showing at the World Cup.

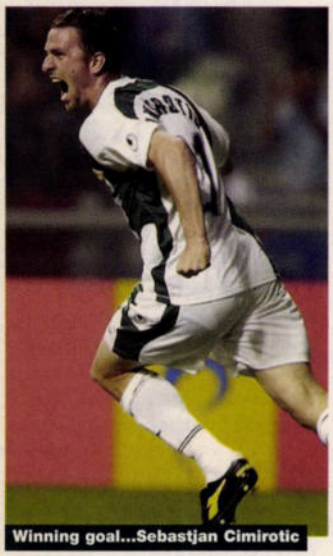
The result, which came thanks to a first-half goal from Sebastjan Cimirotic, meant Bojan Prasnikar made a winning start to his tenure as national coach.

The game was marred, however, by the hooligan behaviour of rival Slovenian nationalist and Italian neo-fascist followers.

Former Croatian international Robert Prosinecki has made an instant impact since joining Olimpija of Ljubljana during the summer. His appearance for his new side against Publikum Celje attracted a crowd of 7,000, a record for a club match since Slovenia gained independence.

As part of the package for joining Olimpija, Prosinecki has been given ownership of a music equipment store called 'Big Bang' in the Croatian capital Zagreb – part of the chain of shops owned by new Olimpija president Jurij Schollmayer.

Zdravko Reic



Winning goal...Sebastjan Cimirotic

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Tie highlights war and peace

THE August friendly in Sarajevo between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Yugoslavia – unthinkable just a few months ago – passed off peacefully, on the pitch at least, with the visitors winning 2-0.

However, there was trouble among the fans, with fighting spilling out into the streets outside the ground after the match.

Bosnia has no fewer than three representatives in the UEFA Cup first round. Sarajevo qualified by beating Czechs Sigma Olomouc on penalties after a 3-3 aggregate draw, while Siroki Brijeg overcame Slovakia's Koba Senec 5-1. Meanwhile, Zeljeznicar take their place after losing their Champions League third qualifying round tie 5-0 to Newcastle.

Zdravko Reic

MACEDONIA

Gigi goes for youth

NATIONAL coach Nikola 'Gigi' Ilievski set out his stall for the Euro 2004 qualifying campaign by naming a number of youngsters in his squad for the first tie, against Liechtenstein. They included Goran Pandev, who became Macedonia's youngest scorer ever, at the age of 19 years and 25 days, in the 5-0 friendly thrashing of Malta in August. Meanwhile, several stalwarts were dropped, notably 34-year-old Sasa Ciric, Toni Micevski (32) and Goran Stavrevski (28).

Macedonian clubs again failed to progress in Europe. Vardar lost to Legia Warsaw 4-2 on aggregate in the Champions League qualifiers, Pobeda fell to Danes Midtjylland 3-2 in the UEFA Cup despite having won the first leg 2-0, and Belasica lost 4-3 to Portugal's Leixoes.

Michel Stojmanovski

ISRAEL

Tel Aviv sides add to success

FOLLOWING Maccabi Haifa's progress into the Champions League group stages, Israel's two UEFA Cup sides continued the country's success in Europe. Hapoel Tel Aviv beat Partizani of Albania 5-1 on aggregate, while Maccabi Tel Aviv overcame Estonia's Levadia Tallinn 4-0.

At home, the FA controversially voted to postpone the start of the League season by at least three weeks in an effort to settle a dispute over television broadcast rights.

National team coach Avraham Grant got off to a winning start as his experimental line-up beat Lithuania 4-2 away in a friendly. They followed up with a 5-0 win in Luxembourg.

Derek Fattal

MALTA

Hibernians lead Euro exit

HIBERNIANS exited the Champions League 7-3 on aggregate to Boavista of Portugal in the second qualifying round. Birkirkara and Sliema Wanderers also made a swift exit from Europe, going out of the UEFA Cup at the hands of Metalurh Zaporizhzhya of Ukraine and Poland's Polonia Warsaw respectively.

Domenico Aquilina

Pro-file Giovanni Rosso

Croatian midfielder more than at home at Maccabi Haifa

picture: Haaretz

MACCABI HAIFA are lucky to have the best midfielder in Israel on their books – Croatian Giovanni Rosso. With his flamboyance and good looks, the 29-year-old has made himself a crowd favourite no matter where he has played in Israel.

Rosso began his career at Hajduk Split before moving to Zagreb. But he rose to stardom only after coming to Israel. The midfielder first arrived in the desert city of Be'er Sheva in 1996, where he played for local side Hapoel under coach Eli Guttman, who discovered him in Croatia. Rosso was soon making an impact, leading the club to win their first State Cup in 1997.

The next season Guttman became coach of Hapoel Haifa, taking Rosso with him. The midfielder was the linchpin during the club's first and only League title-winning season, 1998-99, baffling the opposition and wowing the Haifa supporters with his creative moves on the pitch and gregarious lifestyle off it.

After three seasons there, next stop for Rosso was Beitar Jerusalem as he again followed Guttman. But under the ownership of local tycoon Gad Zeevi, Beitar went into a downward slide that almost ended in bankruptcy. Guttman ended up in hospital in mid-season with a suspected heart attack, and Rosso left at the end of the 2000-01 campaign on a one-season loan to Maccabi Haifa.

Now under Avraham Grant, Rosso had broken the player-coach ties with Guttman for the first time. But with him and Yossi Benayoun together, Maccabi had the best creative midfield unit in the League, and it proved decisive. Rosso was voted Player of the Season at the end of the campaign in which his team ran away with the League title for the second year running. The loan deal was soon replaced by a three-year contract.

Despite recurrent struggles with fitness, Rosso's big heart and skill have made him a huge success in his adopted country. Now, after six years in Israel, he is looking to become a naturalised citizen, and his talents could be an invaluable asset for the national team. However, the immigration authorities are oblivious to the wishes of the soccer community and are not so sure that he is eligible.

Ori Lewis

Fact file

Club Maccabi Haifa (Isr)
Country Croatia
Born November 17, 1972
Previous clubs Hajduk Split, Zagreb, Hapoel Be'er Sheva (Isr), Hapoel Haifa (Isr), Beitar Jerusalem (Isr)
Honours Israeli League 1999 (Hapoel Haifa), 2002 (Maccabi Haifa); Israeli Cup 1997 (Hapoel Be'er Sheva)

Sychev wins freedom at a price

Spartak's rebel teenage forward is banned for four months but will get his wish to leave. Victor Gusev reports

RUSSIA

MOSCOW SPARTAK striker Dmitri Sychev has been banned for four months after unilaterally breaking his contract with the club. However, the teenager will be free to leave the champions at the end of his suspension.

The Russian Football Union's decision on September 4 ended a three-week legal battle over the 18-year-old's future.

Sychev joined Spartak last winter and was voted Russia's best player at the World Cup. However, he was unhappy with his £39,000-a-year contract, which runs until 2006, and informed the club owners that he was leaving.

In the meantime, club president Andrei Chervichenko claims he was approached by "Sychev's people", who suggested that if the player was sold to an unnamed club, Chervichenko would get a cut. The president refused, and before long Sychev was gone.

The teenager did not show up for the team's next training session, sending a note to say that he was in a Moscow hospital for treatment on an injury. Another note went to the RFU claiming Spartak were not fulfilling their contract obligations.

The RFU disciplinary committee reached their decision to ban Sychev after a four-hour hearing. During the suspension, he will not be allowed to train or play for any team. However, at the end of the four months he becomes a free agent, while Spartak will be entitled to compensation. The suspension will be automatically lifted if the player returns to Spartak and resumes his contract.

Sychev, instantly nicknamed the 'Russian Bosman', is claiming victory. The disciplinary committee acknowledged that, in accordance with Russian law, the forward has the right to leave the club of his own volition, even if they had not violated his contract.

But Sychev's case has created a precedent that the local press consider chaotic and dangerous for the future of the game in Russia.

Walkout...Sychev has turned his back on Spartak

Blunder...Radoslaw Majdan

POLAND

Boniek starts with a draw

ZBIGNIEW BONIEK'S first match as national coach, against Belgium in August, ended in a 1-1 draw after blunders by both goalkeepers.

Poland went ahead after six minutes when Geert De Vlieger's slip allowed League top scorer Maciej Zurawski to score. Wesley Sonck equalised three minutes before half-time thanks to an inadvertent assist from Radoslaw Majdan, playing in front of his home crowd in Szczecin.

Boniek accepted Belgium were the better side but added that many of his side had not played together before and were trying to adapt to a 3-5-2 system instead of the 4-4-2 used during the dismal World Cup showing. That said, only Marcin Kus, the 21-year-old Polonia Warsaw defender, was making his debut.

The national team's performances in Korea/Japan continued to be the focus of media attention, but for a bizarre reason. Marian F, a fan from Lublin, sued stadium singer Edyta Gorniak for delivering the national anthem too slowly before Poland's game against co-hosts Korea in Busan. Marian claimed the rendition put the players to sleep and caused them to lose the match 2-0. The Polish anthem is very dynamic and rhythmical, but Gorniak sang it in a slow, clumsy way. Based on this, the fan wanted the singer brought to book. However, the case was dismissed.

In the League, Odra Wodzislaw were the unexpected leaders after five games, while in Europe, Legia Warsaw were sent packing from the Champions League 4-0 on aggregate by Barcelona. They go into the UEFA Cup first round along with Polonia Warsaw, Amica Wronki and Wisla Krakow.

Dariusz Kurowski

UKRAINE

Chernat brings success

FLORIN CHERNAT, the Kyiv Dynamo midfielder, secured his side's place in the Champions League group stages. The 22-year-old Romanian scored home and away as Kyiv beat Levski Sofia 2-0 on aggregate in the third qualifying round.

Chernat, nicknamed 'Diamond' by the Dynamo fans, has been playing with aplomb in the place of long-term injury victim Valentin Bialkevich.

Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk continued to lead the League, a point clear of revelations Arsenal after eight games. Dnipro, who strengthened their attack by signing international Oleh Venhlinskyi from Dynamo, allow only Ukrainians to play for them.

On the coaching front, Igor Nadein surprisingly resigned at Kryvbas, with Olexander Ischenko coming in as his replacement. Metalurh Zaporizhzhya fired Oleh Taran after a run of poor results.

Oleg Zadernovsky

ROMANIA

Dinamo dump Dinu

AS IF 12 of the 16 top-flight clubs changing coach during the summer wasn't enough, champions Dinamo Bucharest decided to replace Cornel Dinu after they went out of the Champions League to Club Brugge.

Dinu has returned to his position as general manager, with Ion Moldovan replacing him on the bench, and Ilie Dumitrescu stepping into his role as national Under-21 coach.

Moldovan began well enough with a 5-0 thumping of Ceahlaul Piatra Neamt. However, defeat by Astra Ploiesti and a draw with Bacau suggested all is not well with the Red Dogs, who have sold striker Claudiu Niculescu to Genoa.

At least Dinamo started better than city rivals Steaua, who took just one point from their opening three games after defeats by Politehnica AEK Timisoara and Universitatea Craiova, the latter two topping the table with 100 per cent records.

Jonathan Wilson

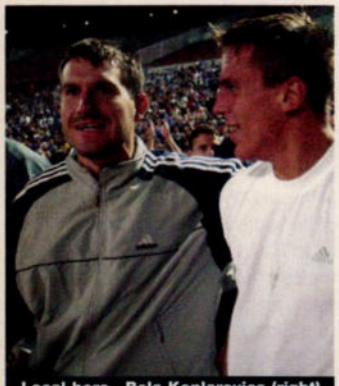
HUNGARY

Zalaegerszeg shock United

ZALAEGERSZEG produced the best European performance by a Hungarian club in years when they shocked Manchester United with a 1-0 win in the Champions League third qualifying round first leg.

A late goal by 21-year-old Bela Koplarovics sealed an improbable victory, although United made up for a hatful of missed chances in Budapest with a 5-0 thrashing in the return.

Despite this, the gritty win by the provincial side, known as ZTE, led to rare celebrations at home, and



Local hero...Bela Koplarovics (right)

enhanced the considerable reputation of coach Peter Bozsik, son of the legendary Jozsef Bozsik and who steered ZTE to the League title in May.

Peterjon Cresswell

BULGARIA

Levski stay positive

LEVSKI SOFIA coach Slavoljub Muslin remained in positive mood despite his side's third failure to qualify for the Champions League group stages. A 1-0 defeat at home to Kyiv Dynamo was followed by the Blues' best away European performance in a decade, but it couldn't stop another 1-0 loss.

"I am sure the future is bright," Muslin insisted, and his words have been borne out by Levski's League performances. Georgi Chilikov hit two hat-tricks, earning an international call-up, as the champions won three of their opening four games.

City rivals CSKA began even better, winning their first four games under Stoichko Mladenov, the former national team boss. The Reds cruised by Dinamo Minsk of Belarus in the UEFA Cup qualifying round, and were joined in the first round by Litex Lovech.

Jonathan Wilson

CZECH REPUBLIC

Euro duo run out of luck

DAME FORTUNE certainly did not smile on the Champions League campaign, as both Slovan Liberec and Sparta Prague went out on away goals in the third qualifying round.

Sparta put in a stirring second-half performance in their home leg against Genk, scoring four times to record a 4-2 victory. However, their failure to score in Belgium in their 2-0 first-leg defeat cost them dear.

Liberec were even more unlucky on their competition debut. They lost by the only goal in the San Siro to Milan and a 2-1 victory in the return wasn't quite enough.

Early coaching casualties included Marila Pribram's Jiri Kotrba, who resigned after just two games. He was replaced by former national team manager Jozef Chovanec.

Vladimir Borovicka stepped down at Bohemians following defeats in the first four games of the season. His replacement is Dusan Uhrin, son of the former Czech national coach. The 35-year-old was formerly Borovicka's assistant at the club.

Roy Kitson

SLOVAKIA

Champions ditch coach after six games

LEOS KALVODA, who led MSK Zilina to their first League triumph last season, was sacked only six matches into the new term.

Zilina won their first three games, drew the next, and lost the following two. They were also eliminated from the Champions League in the second qualifying round by Basle – enough, apparently, to seal Kalvoda's fate.

General manager Karol Belanik defended the decision by saying the team were not playing with the commitment of the previous season.

Frantisek Komnacky has replaced his fellow Czech Kalvoda and is no doubt hoping for a bit more patience from his new employers. Komnacky took Zlin to promotion to the Czech First Division last season only to find his contract was not renewed.

Roy Kitson

Pro-file Radoslaw Gilewicz

Prolific Pole emerging from the wreckage of FC Tirol's crash

FANS of bankrupted Austrian champions FC Tirol could be excused for having difficulty coming to terms with the departure of their Polish goalscoring hero Radoslaw Gilewicz to Austria Wien. During three and a half years in Innsbruck, Gilewicz scored no fewer than 62 goals in 107 League games, providing Tirol with the platform for a hat-trick of championships and earning himself the Austrian Player of the Year award in 2000 and 2001.

At Tirol, Gilewicz found the success that had eluded him in disappointing spells in Germany with Stuttgart and Karlsruhe. However, the club had massive financial problems, and despite clinching a third straight League title in the spring, Gilewicz and his team-mates were effectively forced to move on.

After three months without wages, the *Tiroler* players were free to leave under Austrian law, and everyone made alternative arrangements. Gilewicz and midfielder Jurgen Panis accepted offers from Austria Wien, and two days later the game was officially up for Tirol, expelled from the Austrian Bundesliga for failing to provide the necessary financial guarantees.

"I had a wonderful time at Tirol," says Gilewicz. "We won the League three times in a row, and we had a special set of players. You only have to look at how we kept going last season in spite of not being paid. But it became an unbearable situation. We didn't receive the money we were owed, and no one was prepared to tell us the truth. We were not taken seriously, and in the end, all the players had just had enough."

Now he faces a new challenge at Austria Wien, justifiably a hot tip to win their first national title since 1993. Austro-Canadian billionaire owner Frank Stronach invested in eight new players this summer, including Gilewicz, Panis, ex-Hearts midfielder Thomas Flogel and Norwegian striker Thorstein Helstad. Not only that but highly rated former Karnten coach Walter Schachner has also been brought in to knock the Violet ensemble into shape.

"When all the new arrivals get used to each other, we will be a force to be reckoned with," says Gilewicz. "There is a lot of talent here, and the prospects are exciting. We're good enough to fight for the title."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Austria Wien (Aut)
Country Poland
Born May 8, 1971, in Chelm
Previous clubs GKS Tychy, Ruch Chorzow, St Gallen (Swi), Stuttgart (Ger), Karlsruhe (Ger), FC Tirol (Aut)
International debut October 1997, v Georgia
International caps 9 (0 goals)
Honours Austrian League 2000, 2001, 2002 (FC Tirol)

Selecao losers at political football

Federation chief Ricardo Teixeira has used the World Cup winners in a bid to influence the national presidential election. Brian Homewood reports

BRAZIL

Put your shirt on me...presidential candidate Gomes (left) meets Kaka, Cafu and Scolari before the Paraguay game

IT WAS the World Cup spin-off that Brazilians had feared most. The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF), its president Ricardo Teixeira, and its political allies quickly set about milking the national team's prestige for their own ends. Teixeira, who has previously been accused of turning the *Selecao* into a commercial outfit, now appears to have turned them into a political one.

Last month's friendly at home to Paraguay was officially billed as a "commemorative game". The Brazilian media, however, interpreted it as an attempt to boost the electoral campaign of Ciro Gomes, the man Teixeira would like to win the national presidential election in October.

The CBF held the match in Fortaleza, the political stronghold of Gomes and Tasso Jereseitti, who is running for a place in the Senate and is another of Teixeira's chums. Gomes was allowed into the Brazil dressing-room before the game to be photographed with members of the team, including Cafu, Roberto Carlos and Kaka. Gomes, whose number on the electoral register is 23, was given Kaka's shirt – also No 23.

All this was done with the connivance of FIFA, who forced European clubs to release their Brazilian players for the farce on the ridiculous pretext that the match was a full international.

The only people who didn't read the script were Paraguay, who spoiled Gomes' party by winning 1-0.

Brazil manager Luiz Felipe Scolari admitted his team had been obeying orders when they posed with the presidential candidate. "You, as employees yourselves, should be aware that I am an employee of the CBF, and if the boss gives me an order, I have to obey it," he told reporters.

"But I have also participated in other political acts in Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre," he added, referring to post-World Cup celebrations attended by other politicians. "We don't choose who is going to visit us. The players took part because they are part of a group which was visited."

Scolari had resigned one week before but agreed to stay on for the match, for which he recalled Brazil's entire World Cup squad plus Emerson Ferreira, who had been due to captain the team in Korea/Japan but dislocated his shoulder during a practice match on the eve of the opening finals match against Turkey.

Brazil could not have celebrated their fifth world title in more low-key fashion. Most of the players were still out of shape, particularly Ronaldo, who lasted only 33 minutes in his first match since the Final against Germany 52 days previously.

The Phenomenon's contribution consisted of an attempt to repeat his toe-poke semi-final goal against Turkey and a theatrical dive in the box.

Ronaldo, clearly still in party mode, had returned to Brazil a week before the game and spent his first day in Sao Paulo on an engagement for one of his sponsors. Next morning he flew to an island he bought for himself off the coast of Rio de Janeiro state. He spent the same night at a rave. Not surprisingly after all this, he missed his plane to Fortaleza.

As for Emerson, his performance against Paraguay merely reinforced the theory that his misfortune in South Korea turned out to be a blessing for his country. Within seven minutes of coming on at half-time, Emerson had hacked down an opponent in his usual ruthless style to pick up the only yellow card of an otherwise innocuous game.

Fernando Calazans, columnist for *O Globo*, could not resist pointing

Round-up

A NEW continental club competition got under way at the start of September, but its prestige was severely damaged by the absence of Brazilian teams because of other TV commitments and the offer of only modest prize money.

The Copa Sudamerica features leading clubs from all the continent's other nine countries. However, clubs from the same country face each other in the early rounds, reducing potential for derbies – and supporter interest – in the latter stages.

Prize money is drastically down from that offered for the Mercosur and Merconorte Cups, the two continental competitions that were played for the final time last year.

The Copa Sudamerica winners are scheduled to face Libertadores Cup winners Olimpia of Paraguay in December.

PERU: Argentinian coach Osvaldo Piazza has returned to Universitario, with whom he won the 1998 League title. Sporting Cristal topped the closing championship table after winning their first four games without conceding a goal.

COLOMBIA: Independiente's stadium was closed for three games after the referee was hit by an object thrown by home fans during the 2-0 defeat by Atletico Junior.

BOLIVIA: Players at leading clubs Oriente Petrolero and Bolivar have been on strike because of non-payment of wages.

ECUADOR: All 10 top division clubs now have foreign coaches, including seven Argentinians. The only local coach still in charge, Carlos Sevilla, left struggling Emelec recently.

Eric Weil

out that Brazil's World Cup campaign benefited from Emerson's injury and his replacement with the more cultured Gilberto Silva. "Emerson's departure forced the coach to change his philosophy, replacing the bully-boy style with civilised football," he said. "Having seen Emerson maltreat the pitch in Fortaleza, it's a more than respectable theory."

The rest of the squad were hardly any better, and even Paraguay, who at least made an attempt to take the game seriously, were missing several regulars. Nelson Cuevas, who scored twice in 18 minutes against Slovenia to take them into the last 16 of the World Cup, scored the only goal.

As neither team has a competitive match for a year, there was no footballing reason to justify the game. It was merely a kickabout – as proved when Brazil made 10 substitutions. Only the CBF, who sold television rights and tickets, Globo television, who flogged space to advertisers, and FIFA insisted on pretending it was an international.

The Brazilian media agreed there had rarely been such a blatant case of using the team's prestige for other ends. Veteran commentator Armando Nogueira was horrified. "It was not a game, it was a political move. In fact, it was a party convention. Where has one seen the symbol of the nation reduced to a mere canvasser?" he asked. "Everyone knows Ricardo Teixeira has never understood the *Selecao* does not belong to him or to anybody in particular. When he doesn't use it as a business instrument, he uses it as a tool of power.

"The players, for their part, showed once more they don't know the meaning of citizenship. If they did, they would have refused to play for a candidate in the middle of an electoral campaign."

The notable exception was Rivaldo, who bravely defied Teixeira, refusing to have anything to do with Gomes.

Calazans lamented Teixeira's humiliation of the team. "It's one of his specialities to submit the mysticism and glory of the Brazil team to shameful situations and undignified results," he said.

O Globo put most coverage of the game on its political pages and even wrote an editorial comparing the event to those after the 1970 World Cup. "From the times of general-president Garrastazu Medici... it has been proved that football and politics don't mix," it said. "Not even the third world title saved the military regime from an economic crisis. The supporters are not naive."

Teixeira, it appears, is still smarting from the government's backing for the two Congressional commissions of inquiry that publicly tore apart his administration. Hence his decision to side with Gomes, who is the most bitter opponent of the government-backed candidate Jose Serra.

Ever since the quarter-final win over England made Brazil's fifth world title a probability rather than a possibility, Teixeira had schemed to see how much he could milk out of their win. His first idea had been to take the national team straight from Yokohama to Fortaleza rather than to the capital Brasilia. In fact, Teixeira was in such a sulk with the current President, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, that he wanted to leave Brasilia off the celebration route altogether. It took all the persuasive power that Teixeira's allies could muster to make him back down.

While all this was going on, the Brazilian championship was getting under way. After eight rounds, Atletico Paranaense, Sao Paulo and surprise package Juventude – managed by ex-Paris Saint-Germain and Brazil defender Ricardo Gomes – were neck-and-neck at the top.

Veteran striker Romario made an excellent start with his latest club, Fluminense, hitting four goals in his first three games – including an exquisite one against Gremio – but then went five games without scoring.

Fluminense president David Fischel admitted he had given the striker privileges such as allowing him to travel alone to away matches and even miss occasional training sessions, providing he told the club in advance.

Nine coaches fell in the first month of competition. The oddest change saw Abel Braga return to Botafogo only 46 days after resigning from the club, when Arthur Bernardes, who had replaced him, himself stepped down.

Flamengo's decision to sack Lula Pereira and replace him with Evaristo Macedo left them with seven coaches on their wage bill as they still owed money to six predecessors. Not ideal for a club already millions in debt.

Pro-file Kaka

Sao Paulo prodigy taking on Romario in popularity stakes

BRAZILIAN football forces its stars to grow up quickly. When last year's national championship got under way, Kaka was a nervous debutant anxious to confirm rumours of his promise. Now he already rivals Romario as the biggest name on the domestic scene, and leads Sao Paulo's challenge for their first championship title since 1991. By next year he will almost certainly be at one of Europe's top clubs.

"Kaka is the best young player we have produced in recent seasons," says 1994 World Cup-winning coach Carlos Alberto Parreira. "He's wise beyond his years, and excellent at both setting up and finishing off moves."

Former great Tostao raved about Kaka from the moment the youngster made his first-team breakthrough, enchanted by his skill, strength on the ball and, particularly, his awareness.

But it is not just his football that has put Kaka in the spotlight. His doe-eyed looks and gawky smile have captivated teenage girls. His new status as terrace darling was clear when Brazil played their friendly against Paraguay in August. Where before the cries from the stands had all been for Romario, this time they were for Kaka. "It's nice," says the 20-year-old, "but it doesn't mean that I'm going to outshine the likes of Ronaldo or Ronaldinho. After all, they played the World Cup out there on the pitch."

Kaka played just 18 minutes in Korea/Japan, but believes his time will come, saying: "I've never lost sight of the fact that I need to keep playing well to stay in the spotlight."

Kaka, rare among Brazilian players in coming from an upper middle-class background, approaches his career as might a business studies graduate. "I see myself as a company, " he says. "I'm supplying a service and if I do it well then my customer, Sao Paulo, will be satisfied and happy to pay me. And then I'll go looking for a bigger customer."

The bottom line now, though, is winning the championship with Sao Paulo. Last season, Kaka's partnership with striker Franca was the most attractive aspect of the entire competition. Now Franca has moved on to Germany, Sao Paulo push two strikers wide, leaving plenty of space for Kaka to surge down the middle.

Not surprisingly, he is having to get used to tough tackling. "I'm not here to kick anyone," Kaka points out, "but I'm going to defend myself" – as proved by a booking in each of Sao Paulo's first five games. "I deserve some respect. I'm not a kid any more."

Indeed not. Kaka looks capable of doing a man-sized job in one of the world's most demanding leagues.

Tim Vickery

Fact file

Club Sao Paulo
Country Brazil
Born May 15, 1982, in Brasilia
International debut January 2002, v Bolivia
International caps 5 (1 goal)
Honours World Cup 2002; Rio-Sao Paulo tournament 2001

Menotti making Central tick

The 1978 World Cup-winning coach is at the heart of a Rosario revival, writes Eric Weil

Hail Cesar...Menotti's young lions celebrate another goal on their rise to the top of the table

ARGENTINA

AFTER an uncertain start at Rosario Central, former national team boss Cesar Menotti has brought his influence to bear, leading his side to the top of the opening championship standings.

The 1978 World Cup-winning coach arrived at Central towards the end of last season, returning to the club he had played for 40 years before.

"We have a commitment to the fans, even if only a handful of them come to watch us or if we have a packed stadium," said the 63-year-old. "And I also want the players to enjoy their game."

Menotti had met with some resistance from the fans on his arrival, antagonism that was heightened when Central lost several games towards the end of last season to finish a lowly 16th out of 20 in the closing campaign.

But by the time the current season began, Menotti had managed to instil his fluid style of play into the young team – continual rotation of position and with the emphasis firmly on attack when in possession, closing down space absolutely when attacked. Doubtless, the coach's position is all the more secure after his side won the Rosario derby 2-0 against Newell's Old Boys at the start of September.

Osvaldo Ardiles, part of Menotti's World Cup-winning side, has not been faring so well since his appointment as Racing Club coach only days before the start of the season. Clearly, he had little opportunity to influence the side he inherited from Reinaldo Merlo. Despite saying: "I want a team that wins, pleases the fans and scores goals" on his arrival, Racing have so far looked ponderous, lacking in creation and short of firepower – just six goals in their first six games. Worse still, they lost 4-1 to Independiente in the Avellaneda derby, a game, in fact, played at River Plate's stadium because of the fatal clashes between hooligan supporters before their last meeting.

Despite his problems at Racing, Ardiles has had time to think of others. He stepped in to offer financial guarantees to avoid the auction of assets of cash-strapped Instituto Cordoba, where he first played as a professional.

Independiente followed up their victory over Racing with a 2-1 win away at Velez Sarsfield and a 7-1 home thumping of Colon Santa Fe. These results allowed them to leap above Central to take top spot by a point, having started the season with the worst relegation average and thinking only of survival.

One of Independiente's many new recruits, attacking midfielder Federico Insua, has been a key factor in the team's resurgence.

River Plate lost their early lead to Rosario when surprisingly defeated 2-1 at home by Huracan. Shortly before this, the club had come in for criticism from players, fans and coach Manuel Pellegrini alike after arranging a mid-season trip to Honduras for a friendly against Marathon. On top of that, River lost 3-1.

Meanwhile, Boca Juniors appear to have found a promising replacement for key midfielder Juan Roman Riquelme, sold to Barcelona in the summer. Carlos Tevez, destined to be a star of the future, did his reputation no harm by scoring both Boca's goals as they came from 2-0 down to salvage a draw at home to San Lorenzo in round five.

Striker Alberto Acosta, now 36, has agreed to sign on for another year with bankrupt San Lorenzo, who are now in the hands of the receivers. Acosta is still proving to be a mainstay of the team.

Police have resorted to firing rubber bullets at two recent matches as hooliganism continues to blight the domestic game. Estudiantes de La Plata fans were fired on as they tried to break on to the pitch in disgust at their 6-0 home defeat by River Plate in round five. On the same day, the game between near neighbours Banfield and Lanus had to be abandoned after 24 minutes as police and fans battled in the stands. One supporter was hit in the eye by a rubber bullet, and there were 25 arrests. The trouble started when police tried to take a large Lanus banner from the visiting fans. Such items are now forbidden at matches as supporters frequently fight for their possession.

As indicated last month, Marcelo Bielsa has signed a new contract to continue as national team coach, despite Argentina's early exit from the World Cup. The deal extends his stay to the 2006 finals.

MEXICO

Sanchez forced to swallow his pride

PUMAS UNAM coach Hugo Sanchez has been forced to eat humble pie after his team were beaten 4-1 by Toluca. There has been a war of words between Sanchez and Toluca coach Ricardo Lavolpe since the start of the opening championship campaign over the vacant position of national team coach, for which both are leading candidates.

Sanchez, the former Mexican international, said pointedly that only a Mexican should lead the national team, and freely used the word "mercenaries" when referring to foreign players. Lavolpe was born in Argentina but ended his playing days with Mexican side Atlante, has spent his entire coaching career in Mexico and is a Mexican citizen.

Worse was to follow for Sanchez after the defeat by Toluca – Pumas lost 6-0 to Atlas, coached by former Toluca and national team coach Enrique Meza. Sanchez has been silent ever since.

A weakness of the domestic League group system has been well

Embarrassed...Hugo Sanchez

and truly exposed in the current campaign, with Guadalajara topping Group 4 and on course to enter the knockout stages having taken just seven points from six games. Under the current system, all 20 clubs play each other once, but because they are split into four groups of five, weak sides can qualify for the knockout phase as long as those clubs they are pooled with are doing even worse.

Carlos Ramirez

Twellman and Ruiz battle it out

Paul Gardner on the race to be MLS top scorer

UNITED STATES

THE play-off system employed by Major League Soccer inevitably reduces the importance of the regular season and makes it merely the curtain raiser for the real thing.

The 140 regular season games played during the 26-week MLS season decide two things. Firstly, they crown the champions of the Eastern and Western Conferences, the two groups of five teams. Secondly, they decide which eight teams move forward into the play-offs and which two teams see their season abruptly ended.

This arrangement means that any suspense at the end of the regular season is likely to take place at the bottom end of the table, as three or four clubs struggle to claim the remaining play-off spots. The first few qualifiers are usually decided well before the end of the season.

This year, DC United, once the pride of the League, have the worst record and look certain – for the third consecutive year – to miss the play-offs. San Jose Earthquakes (reigning champions), Los Angeles Galaxy, Dallas Burn and Colorado Rapids – all from the Western Conference – have their play-off spots nailed down, leaving MetroStars, New England Revolution, Columbus Crew, Chicago Fire and Kansas City Wizards fighting it out for the other four berths.

While this somewhat synthetic struggle goes on, MLS has been lucky enough to be handed a real battle full of real soccer excitement and featuring two young and thrilling players. At the time of writing, the race to be the League's leading scorer is a fight between two 22-year-old strikers – Carlos Ruiz of Los Angeles and Taylor Twellman of New England. Each player has two games left to play, so that Ruiz – with 20 goals compared to Twellman's 17 – would seem to have it wrapped up.

Not so fast, there. The MLS title may say "scoring leader" but it doesn't quite mean what it says. Assists are included in the reckoning, so that it becomes a points total that matters: two points for a goal, one for each assist. Under that system, Ruiz (20 goals and one assist) has 41 points, a slender two-point lead over Twellman (17 goals and five assists).

Both Twellman and Ruiz are in their first MLS season, but they come from starkly different backgrounds. Twellman is a middle-class Mid-westerner from St Louis, the son of a former US national team player, Tim Twellman. A star of the US Under-17 team during the 1997 World Championship in Egypt, Twellman spent two years in college at the University of Maryland before opting for a pro career with 1860 Munich in Germany. That was not a happy experience. He ran into the same problem that Landon Donovan experienced at Bayer Leverkusen – most of his time was spent on the bench.

Twellman followed Donovan's lead and returned to the USA, where a regular starting job with the Revs has allowed his considerable talents to blossom.

Ruiz was born in poverty in Guatemala City and learned his craft on bumpy, dusty fields, where genuine soccer footwear was almost unknown. He played his first

Guatemala love-in...from Galaxy goal machine Carlos Ruiz

pro game at 16 for Municipal, and by the age of 20 he was the captain of Guatemala's Olympic team.

Ruiz's performances made a great impression on LA Galaxy coach Sigi Schmid, who pursued him for two years until signing him for the current season.

Nicknamed El Pescadito – the little fish – Ruiz speaks little English, but his soccer language has needed no translation, as a series of often breathtaking goals have made Galaxy one of the favourites for the MLS title.

Should Twellman surge ahead to claim the title, it is to be hoped that he does so by more than two points because two of the points in his current total are highly suspect. They come from a game early in the season, when Dallas keeper Matt Jordan punched a corner kick into his own net.

The goal was, astonishingly, 'awarded' to Twellman even though he never played the ball at all. He was merely "the nearest player applying pressure". Only in America would Twellman have been gifted that goal.

South Africa arrive at last

Mark Gleeson on Bafana Bafana's overdue appearance in the Cosafa Castle Cup Final

Doubling up...Tebeho Mokoena scored twice in South Africa's semi-final victory

SOUTH AFRICA have been the top-ranked side in the region since the Cosafa Castle Cup was launched for countries in the south of the continent six years ago. However, they have only just reached their first Final of the annual event, the second richest in African football, by thrashing Swaziland 4-1 in Polokwane in the semi-final.

South Africa's win set up a two-leg encounter with Malawi, also Final debutants, who surprisingly beat Zambia 1-0 in Blantyre. It also marked a dream debut for new coach Ephraim Mashaba, the former national Under-23 boss, who succeeded World Cup coach Jomo Sono shortly before the tie.

Midfielder Tebeho Mokoena opened the scoring for Bafana Bafana in the first half, outjumping Swazi goalkeeper Linoh Magagula to head in a harmless-looking cross. Siza Dlamini equalised from a free-kick, but Mokoena volleyed a second in the 64th minute, precipitating a Swazi collapse. With 12 minutes left defender Tony Coyle was brought down in the box by Mxolisi Mthethwa, and Jabu Pule converted the penalty. Substitute Stanton Fredericks scored the fourth goal in added time after another Swazi defensive mix-up.

Mashaba said he had been nervous about the Swazi threat and the fact that the match was against supposedly lightweight opposition, who were highly motivated and had little to lose. "I would have been happy with just a 1-0 result. This was a fantastic day," he said.

Malawi's victory came from a controversial penalty by teenage striker Essau Kanyenda, who had won the decision with what looked like a blatant dive following a tussle with defender Sashi Chalwe.

Even so, Malawi deserved the goal after looking the better side in a gritty match against their neighbours, who have long dominated them in regional competition. Zambia's Rotson Kilambe was sent off in added time at the end of the game for a wild tackle as tempers flared under the tension.

Al Ahly up against it

DEFENDING champions Al Ahly are far from out of the African Champions League but still face an arduous task to make the semi-finals following a disastrous start to this year's campaign.

The Egyptians, building on their surprise win of last year, had high expectations after appointing Dutch coach Jo Bonfrere and bringing back wing-backs Mohamed Emara and Yasser Radwan from Germans Hansa Rostock. But they crashed at home in their first Group A game to lightweights Jeanne d'Arc of Senegal and then lost in Morocco to Raja Casablanca.

A third defeat would have put Al Ahly out of the running but Ahmed Belal's goal gave them a 1-0 win over Democratic Republic of Congo's TP Mazembe in Cairo.

TP Mazembe and Raja were top with six points each after three rounds.

Group B looks to be heading for a quick settlement, with Zamalek, the other Egyptian representatives, and Esperance of Tunisia both unbeaten and racing away from the other two teams. Zamalek and Esperance played out a thrilling 1-1 draw in Tunis in mid-August and have both beaten Ivorians ASEC Abidjan at home and Mozambique's Costa do Sol away in their opening three ties.

The top two finishers in the groups qualify for November's semi-finals.

Mark Gleeson

Senegal stars threaten rebellion over Metsu

SENEGAL have seemingly embarked on a programme of shooting themselves in the foot following their outstanding showing at the World Cup finals.

In the wake of coach Bruno Metsu's acrimonious departure, a player rebellion is looming to demand the return of the Frenchman when his 10-month contract with Al Ain in the United Arab Emirates expires next year.

No replacement for Metsu had been named in the run-up to the Lions' first African Nations Cup qualifier, and any chance of building on the World Cup experience seemed lost.

On top of that, a potentially disastrous battle between the administrators and the players looks almost certain to boil over, as the overseas-based stars flex their muscles, while administrators seem directionless and stymied by self-interest.

Metsu was top of the agenda at a meeting in Paris in August between the federation and key Senegalese players. The players went in to bat for their coach, while the federation claimed he did not want to stay anyway. Metsu had asked for, and was apparently granted, leave of absence from his contract, which has a year to run, to go to Al Ain. Senegal do not have a busy programme over the next year, and should romp through Nations Cup qualifiers against minnows Lesotho, Sao Tome e Principe and Gambia. Metsu would have been back for the last two qualifiers and the 2004 finals.

However, the federation was digging its heels in. "He asked for a leave of absence to go and make money elsewhere, but this is not part and parcel of football," said president Malick Sy, who has also allegedly turfed out Metsu's assistants, Abdoulaye Sarr and Jules Bocande.

After the Paris meeting, Khalilou Fadiga threatened a boycott if Metsu was not brought back, while El Hadji Diouf and Salif Diao refused to travel to a Lions training camp. A Senegalese newspaper poll showed 71 per cent of the public wanted Metsu back. The issue is far from resolved.

Mark Gleeson

Controversial departure...Bruno Metsu

Round-up

Chukwu lands Eagles job - for now

CHRISTIAN CHUKWU, former assistant to **NIGERIA** coach Clemens Westerhof, has taken charge of the Super Eagles. He has been given a two-year contract, though he will hold the reins only until a foreign coach is appointed, after which he will revert to his assistant's role. Chukwu, a former captain of Nigeria, also had a spell as Kenya's coach.

Enyimba became the first Nigerian side since 1990 to successfully defend the League title when coming from behind to beat El Kanemi Warriors 2-1 in their last game of the season to finish four points ahead of Enugu Rangers.

Egypt's finest...Mohamed Barakat

Elsewhere in **WEST AFRICA**, **BURKINA FASO** will host the African Youth Championship from January 4-18. The eight-team tournament will provide the four African qualifiers for the World Youth Championship, to be played in the United Arab Emirates in March.

NIGER have named former international Amadou Doula as coach.

Kadala Kromah has been reappointed coach of **LIBERIA**, taking over from George Weah. Kromah, 50, who previously coached in Benin, Cameroon, Ghana and Nigeria, was in charge of Liberia for four months in 2000 but was sacked after a World Cup qualifying defeat in Sudan and replaced by Weah.

Club Olympique de Bamako took the **MALIAN** Cup by beating Stade Malien 2-1 in the Final, while Africa Sports won the **IVORIAN** Cup, with a 2-0 win over Renaissance Daoukro in Abidjan. Lassina Dao and Pierre Guyra scored the goals.

Wallidan completed the Double in **GAMBIA** by beating Real Banjul 1-0 in the FA Cup Final with an 85th-minute goal from Ousman Jallow.

AS Douane beat Semassi Sokode 3-1 to pip Marantha de Fiokpo for the **TOGO** title on goal difference.

CENTRAL AFRICA

Swiss Claude Andrey, formerly at Etoile du Carouge, has been named **CONGO'S** new national team boss.

Etoile du Congo retained the League title for the fourth successive season, beating FC Abeilles 2-1 in the championship final in Brazzaville.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO'S former captain Eugene Kabongo has been put in charge of all the country's national sides.

US Mbilazambi completed the Double in **GABON.** They finished three points ahead of defending champions FC 105 Libreville to take their first title since 1981. In the Cup Final, USM beat JS Libreville 4-2 on penalties after a 1-1 draw.

EAST AFRICA

German Jochen Figge has been appointed **ETHIOPIA'S** coach.

Rayon Sport retained the League title in **RWANDA** by beating leaders APR FC 4-1.

NORTH AFRICA

Mohamed Barakat, who helped Ismaili to a surprise League title triumph in May, has been named **EGYPT'S** Footballer of the Year.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Former Zimbabwe national coach Roy Barreto is new boss of **SOUTH AFRICAN** Premier League club Orlando Pirates. He takes over from Frenchman Jean-Yves Kerjean, who was fired a week before the start of the season. Former national team boss Trott Moloto has taken the reins at AmaZulu, relegated from the top flight last season.

SWAZILAND will host the African Under-17 Championship in May.

Mark Gleeson

Pro-file Mahamadou Diarra

Classy Malian prodigy ready to purr for Lyon

MAHAMADOU DIARRA was quietly purring like the well-tuned motor on a luxury car at this year's African Nations Cup finals. The Malian impressed all with his visionary passing and calming influence in midfield as the hosts went all the way to the semi-finals.

Diarra, barely 21, has continued his rapid rise to the top by signing for French champions Lyon over the summer. He joined for £3.9 million from Vitesse Arnhem, where his performances had also attracted the interest of Ajax, Lazio and Paris Saint-Germain.

However, Lyon made the first concrete bid, and Diarra's transfer was completed just weeks after the club had snatched the French League title away from Lens on a dramatic final day.

Diarra, whose nickname Djila is a reference to the ancient Malian gold dynasty, is a prodigy of one of the country's greatest players, Salif Keita, the first African Footballer of the Year.

Keita operates his own academy and team in the capital, Bamako. However, Diarra did not stay long there. At 17 he was off to Europe, joining OFI Crete. But it was his return to Africa that precipitated the first real interest from bigger clubs. His performances at the 1999 African Youth Championship in Ghana caught the eye, including an enquiry from Barcelona. However, it was Vitesse who snapped him up after just one season in Greece, and the arrival of Ronald Koeman as coach helped elevate Diarra's game to a new level.

At Lyon, he replaces another African, Cameroon's Marc-Vivien Foe (now at Manchester City), a challenge that excites Diarra. "I have a great chance to make an impression here," he says, "especially as I'm surrounded by so many good players."

Mark Gleeson

Fact file

Club Lyon (Fra)
Country Mali
Born May 18, 1981, in Bamako
Previous clubs OFI Crete (Gre), Vitesse Arnhem (Hol)
International debut January 1998, v Togo
International caps 13 (2 goals)

Jubilant Jubilo's last-gasp title

Mike Plastow & Yumiko Nagae on yet another First Stage triumph for the Iwata club

JAPAN

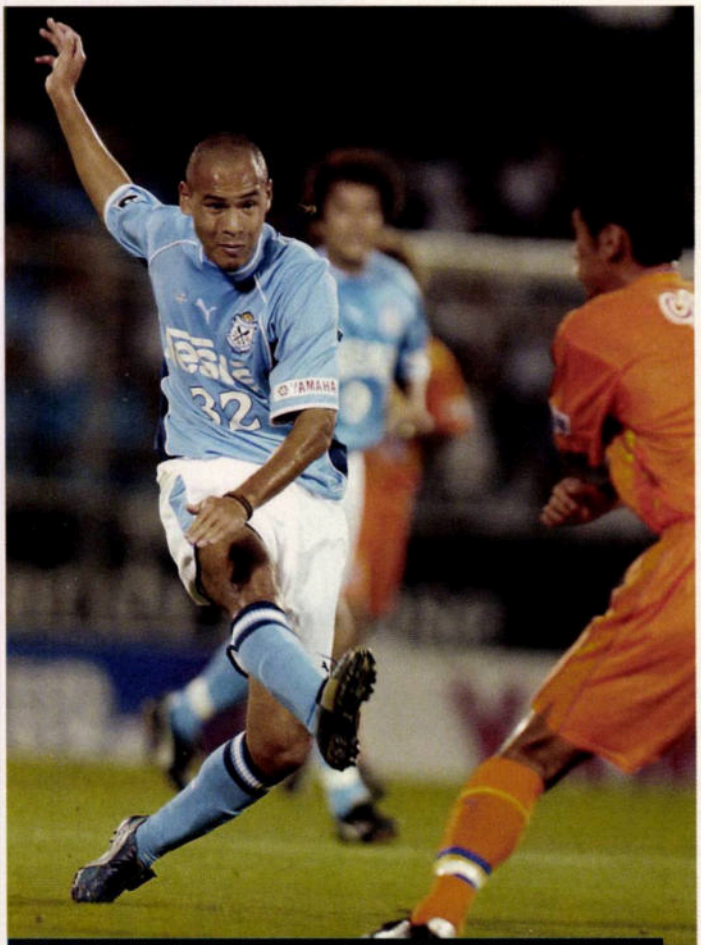
JUBILO IWATA leapfrogged leaders Yokohama F Marinos in the penultimate round of the League First Stage, then made sure of the title by beating Kashiwa Reysol 3-2 in a nail-biting final match.

"We came to secure the victory and the players did the job," said Jubilo manager Masakazu Suzuki after his team had won their fourth First Stage title in five years. "We had many national team commitments with the World Cup, and it has been a hot summer, but we are playing more fluid football this year and the individual quality is good."

Jubilo lost only one First Stage game – to Marinos in April – while Marinos' unbeaten run ended in August with the 2-1 defeat at Kashima Antlers that allowed Jubilo to go top.

Jubilo's victory was sweetest of all for striker Naohiro Takahara, who made a remarkable comeback from the lung thrombosis that wrecked his World Cup chances. He scored in all his club's last seven games, finishing joint top of the scorers' chart, and was voted Player of the First Stage by the other J.League players.

On the coaching front, Steve Perryman's replacement at Kashiwa Reysol is Marco Aurelio, formerly in charge of Brazilian club Cruzeiro.



Flying finish...Naohiro Takahara scored in all Jubilo Iwata's last seven games

AUSTRALIA

Olympic stay afloat

THE owners of Sydney Olympic have agreed to continue funding the club for another year, ending fears the National Soccer League would lose its defending champions.

For several weeks, Olympic's largest shareholder, Nick Politis, had indicated the club's future in the NSL was dependent on a buyout by Leeds United. However, after the English Premier League club decided against acquiring a majority stake, Politis pledged his support until the end of the forthcoming campaign.

Concerns over Olympic's future have overshadowed everything else during the close season, despite a busy transfer market. However, nearly all movements have been internal. The most noteworthy of the few overseas recruits is Chile midfielder Patricio Almendra, who has joined wooden spooners Auckland Kingz.

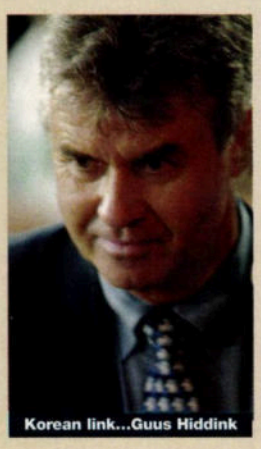
The Kingz also have a new coach, former New Zealand national team boss Ken Dugdale, back after an unfruitful stint at Norway's Vesteralen.

South Melbourne, Marconi and Northern Spirit all have fresh hands at the helm, too, in Danny Wright, Raul Blanco and Laurie McKinna respectively.

Paul Moon

Round-up

IRAQ lifted the West Asian Football Federation Championship by coming from 2-0 down to beat Jordan 3-2 in extra-time in Damascus.



Korean link...Guus Hiddink

Haider Mahmoud scored the golden goal winner in the 103rd minute. Iran, who won the inaugural title in Jordan two years ago, took third place, defeating hosts Syria on penalties.

SYRIA competed without coach Jalal Talebi. The Iranian, who took his country to France 98, quit two weeks before the tournament after 10 months at the helm.

Former **SOUTH KOREA** coach Guus Hiddink, now in charge of PSV Eindhoven, has been named as a technical advisor to the Korean FA.

CHINA has announced plans to launch a Super League in 2004. FA president Zhang Jilong said the number of teams competing in the top flight – currently 15 – would be reduced to help improve standards. "The CFA is determined to reinvent the League's image," he said. "Our aim is to improve the local game and create a healthy environment for a League of high standards. To achieve that, the meaning of a victory must be given more weight."

England's Newcastle United have announced a joint plan with Dalian Shide to set up a new club in Hong Kong. The team, to be called Hong Kong United, are expected to start playing in the Chinese League next year.

A new tournament, the **FAR EAST CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP**, has been added to the calendar for 2003. It will pit the champions of Japan, South Korea and China against each other, with Japan, the initial hosts, entering a second representative – the winners of the Yamazaki Nabisco Cup.

Financially troubled Brazilian club Vasco da Gama have loaned veteran striker Bebeto to **SAUDI ARABIA'S** Al Ittihad for six months.

Penang won the **MALAYSIAN** Cup for the first time by beating League champions Perak 1-0.

Englishman John Constantine enjoyed a winning start to his tenure as national coach of **INDIA**, who lifted the LG Cup in Vietnam with a 3-2 win over the hosts in the Final, having overcome Indonesia 3-0. India also played two friendlies against Jamaica in England, losing 3-0 at Watford and drawing 0-0 at Wolverhampton.

Michael Church, Azam Mahmood, Mike Plastow & Bhasi Malaparamba

In **NEW ZEALAND**, Glenfield Rovers, Western Suburbs and Caversham will contest the National League promotion/relegation series along with Waitakere City, who finished bottom of the 2002 National League.

In **FIJI**, Nadroga won their first Battle of the Giants title in 11 years, beating favourites Labasa 2-1 in the Final.

Paul Moon

Changes needed...last year's Final

A Champions League makeover

A suggestion for revamping the Champions League. Let the champions of the previous two seasons take part, rather than champions and runners-up.

If this had been adopted this year, the line-up would have been: Juventus and Roma from Italy, Valencia and Real Madrid from Spain, Arsenal and Man Utd from England, and Dortmund and Bayern from Germany.

The quality is still there and it would place more incentive on teams to win their domestic leagues as it would mean two seasons of lucrative Champions League. And we won't see teams 'celebrating' Champions League qualification by finishing second.

Victor Mra, by e-mail.

Gavin Hamilton replies: Nice idea, Victor, but what happens when a team wins the League in successive seasons? The changes that UEFA recently agreed for the 2003-04 season make sense in both sporting and commercial terms – they should stick with them for the forseeable future.

Italy needs to face facts

I find the recent letters from bitter Italians rather pathetic. The World Cup was full of poor refereeing decisions, that is not up for debate; but this is not the first time that the Italians have used this as an excuse.

I have another reason for Italy's exit from the World Cup: a lack of ability. Italy played four average teams and struggled in all but the Ecuador match. During the Mexico game, and late on against South Korea, I could not believe this was the side that had been hyped up so much before the tournament.

Poor refereeing decisions are, unfortunately, part of the game, and every team suffers from them. Perhaps if Totti, Delvecchio and co stopped trying to cheat referees it would make their jobs easier and they may find themselves on the end of fewer poor decisions.

Just a thought.

Matthew Dell, Bognor Regis, West Sussex

The decision by Channel Four to drop coverage of the Italian Serie A was a big disappointment as I have enjoyed their programmes for the past decade.

But it is surely the biggest sign yet that Calcio is not what it was. Serie A is now in terminal decline and the Spanish Liga is now the world's best league.

Sarah Kennedy, Sheffield

Gavin Hamilton replies: Italy didn't lack for talented footballers. At the World Cup, their tactics and mental attitude let them down. They thought 1-0 would be enough to see them through against Korea, and they played accordingly.

As for the decline of Italian football, it's more complicated than that. I understand that Channel Four refused to pay the fee that RAI, the Italian state broadcaster and rights-holder, was demanding. The value of televised football is declining across the continent, not just in Italy.

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ACROSS

1 PSG midfielder transferred to Celta Vigo last year (6)
3 Cameroon's 2002 World Cup captain (4)
7 National side taken to Korea/Japan by Alexandre Guimaraes (5,4)
9 Last season's top scorer in Croatia (4)
10 Argentinian midfielder in Real Madrid's 2002 Champions League Final side (6)
12 Croatian striker whose clubs include Lazio and Middlesbrough (6)
13 Lens midfielder sent off in the 2002 African Nations Cup semi-finals (4)
16 Goalkeeper of Porto and Portugal (5,4)
17 Ex-Argentinos Juniors midfielder in England with Sunderland (4)
18 Forward back at Mouscron from Galatasaray (6)

DOWN

1 Leverkusen defender in Brazil's 2002 World Cup team (5)
2 Admira Wacker and Poland midfielder once of PSV and Austria Wien (4)
4 Kashima Antlers midfielder first capped by Japan this year (9)
5 Esperance and Tunisia international who joined Genoa in 2001 (5)
6 Austrian League champions, 2000-2002 (5)
8 Coach appointed to lead Bosnia-Herzegovina's national team this year (9)
11 Brazilian who joined Gamba Osaka earlier this year (5)
12 Esperance and Tunisia midfielder briefly with Genoa (5)
14 Polish defender who helped Feyenoord win the UEFA Cup (5)
15 Assistant to England coach Sven Goran Eriksson (4)

AUGUST SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Edmilson, 7 Kalou, 8 Amara, 9 Breen, 10 Zane, 13 Lens, 14 Basle, 17 Okuka, 18 Linke, 19 Berntsen.
DOWN: 1 Enke, 2 Malbranque, 3 Lauren, 4 Okan, 5 Brabec, 6 Magallanes, 11 Alioum, 12 Pavlin, 15 Faye, 16 Leon.

AUGUST WINNERS

1st prize: Mark Davies, Pembrokeshire, Wales.
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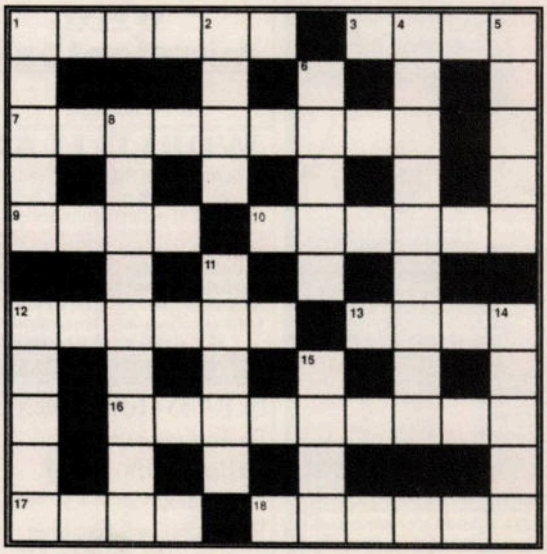

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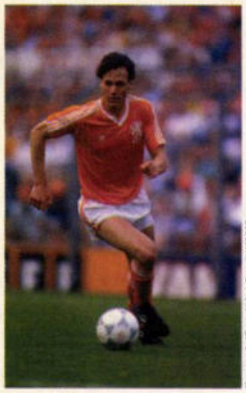

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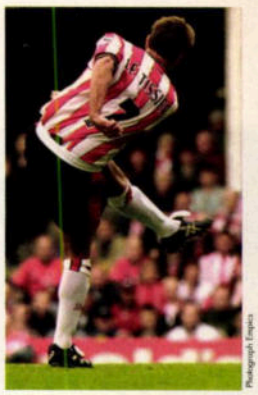

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Brian Glanville's LAST WORD

'In letting Keane's book take the form it did, Eamon put the cat among the pigeons'

Dunphy's 'paraphrasing' needs translation

EAMON DUNPHY, the ghostwriter of Roy Keane's autobiography, has surely put a new gloss on the word 'paraphrase'. Trying to defuse the controversy over the Manchester United captain's foul-mouthed emissions over the assault on Manchester City's Alf-Inge Haaland towards the end of the 2000-01 season, Dunphy has declared that he might have been guilty of paraphrasing.

But how do you paraphrase industrial language? Surely by toning it down, bowdlerising it. Hardly by taking a less aggressive statement – could Keane merely have said something like: "I brought him to the ground and said, 'take that, you brute, for what you said to me at Leeds' " – and jazzing it up with those expletives. I am not convinced.

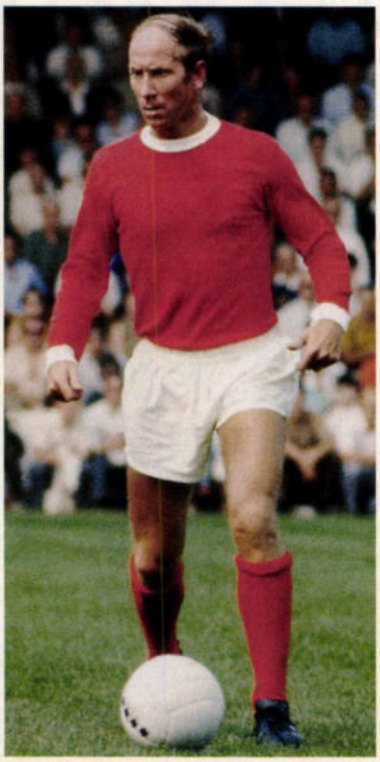
Eamon is a clever fellow and, for me at least, a likeable one. I even wrote the foreword to his notable memoir, *Only A Game*. But in allowing Keane's book to take the form it did, expletives deleted or added, he put the cat among the pigeons.

Then came Keane's sending off against Sunderland, just days before the publication of his book. At least Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson deigned to go on television to give his own eccentric view of his captain's expulsion.

Keane, he announced, had been unjustly punished; he had certainly not elbowed Jason McAteer; the contact was minimal; he did not deserve to be sent off; United would be examining the video with a view to further action.

None of which addressed the reality of the case.

Insult to injury...Keane goads a prostrate Haaland after THAT tackle



Bobby Charlton: a tale of two Uniteds

LEO McKINSTRY'S fascinating, admirably researched biography of the Charlton brothers, *Jack and Bobby* (CollinsWillow), deals, among other things, with the still perplexing story of how Bobby came to join Manchester United rather than Newcastle United.

McKinstry quotes my own recounting of how Jackie Milburn, a cousin of the Charltons' dominating mother, Cissie, described it. Milburn told me, when I was a very young journalist who used to visit him at the old Great Northern Hotel at King's Cross station when Newcastle played in London, that Bobby was destined to play for the Magpies. They were, after all, his local club, besides then having Milburn as their star turn.

But to Milburn's dismay, Manchester United swooped and signed Bobby.

When he talked to Cissie about this, Milburn told me, she said that Manchester United had offered the family £750, which they couldn't possibly afford to turn down.

In her own somewhat bizarrely ghosted autobiography – whose stilted language could scarcely be connected with her – Cissie was at pains to deny any such story, mounting her moral high horse to insist that her family could never have accepted such an inducement.

In all fairness, I must also say that when I put the story once to Jackie Charlton, he denied it outright, and I have never spoken about it to Bobby.

The fact is, though, that Manchester United and Chelsea were notorious at that time for the way they snapped up young talent that might have been expected to go to a local club – Duncan Edwards, from the West Midlands, being an example. How cruel to think that had this dynamic left-half joined Wolves or even West Bromwich Albion he would not have been on United's plane that fatal February day in Munich.

You pays your money, then, and you takes your choice. All I am prepared to say is that I can see no reason why Milburn should have told anything but what he

Television made it all too clear that Keane had come up behind McAteer *off the ball* and simply taken a swing at him. With his elbow, it appeared, but what if it wasn't? What made the offence so culpable and so indefensible was that in no way could it be seen as an accident, the kind of thing that can inadvertently happen when two players go up to head the ball and one of them, arms outstretched for balance, makes painful contact with the other. Those indeed can sometimes be hard to judge. This wasn't, remotely.

Not that McAteer was an innocent figure; his far too lightly punished foul earlier in the game doubtless poured oil on flames that were already burning after he and Keane had clashed over the now notorious autobiography.

Ferguson later backtracked on Keane's innocence, but it shouldn't have been necessary. Still, at least he didn't abuse the interviewer as he once did poor John Motson.

'Ferguson backtracked on Keane's innocence, but it shouldn't have been necessary'

regarded as the truth to an obscure young journalist, who he knew would not attempt to publicise the story.

McKinstry's book never flinches from telling it like it is. The stand-off between the brothers; the rift between Bobby and Cissie over her hostility to his wife, Norma; the antipathy between United's Celtic contingent and Bobby – Pat Crerand is quoted as calling Bobby "an imposter", which indeed I once heard him do. Since I liked and respected both of them, it was saddening.

That Bobby, the epitome of conscience and rectitude, should deplore the self-destructive, self-serving antics of the young George Best was predictable, though I do feel McKinstry is too hard on George. As one who knew and greatly liked him from his teenage years, I always felt that he might have been saved from himself under more sophisticated tutelage, from an earlier age.

One anecdote. Horribly traumatised by the Munich air crash, Bobby at the 1958 World Cup in Sweden was largely silent and withdrawn. He had just played as poorly as the rest of the England team in a 5-0 defeat by Yugoslavia in a roasting Belgrade. Sitting in the lounge of the Park Avenue hotel in Gothenburg, I did hear him tell a joke. A full-up bus had halted at a stop in the North-east. A passenger who failed to get on asked the conductor: "How long will the next one be?" "About as long as this one," was the reply.

Bobby, to the outrage of the popular press, didn't get a game in that World Cup and was later the object of fatuous criticism by Walter Winterbottom, the eternal manager, and captain Billy Wright in their jointly written book. Just one more sign of how the English football establishment has mistrusted unusual brilliance.

Absurdly, in the play-off lost to Russia in Gothenburg, England not only omitted Charlton, but capped two debutants in Peter Broadbent, the Wolves inside-right, and the Chelsea right-winger, Peter Brabrook. Bobby's time would come.

Confrontation...riot police and fans clash in Trieste

Trieste always spelt trouble

THE friendly between Italy and Slovenia in Trieste was a truly wretched episode. What bird-brains at the Italian FA decided to play such a match at such a venue? True, they didn't really want to stage it at all but were forced to do so under their agreement with RAI, the state television service. Yet the city has been a bitter bone of contention between Italy and the Slovenians for generations.

As it was, and quite predictably, embattled Italian neo-fascists turned up at one end, Slovenian nationalists at the other, the groups abusing one another throughout. The pitch was bombarded with missiles, the Slovenians smashed up the stadium's medical facilities. And a miserably ineffectual Italy deservedly lost 1-0 – even if their players were not yet fully match-fit.

Fish out of water...the appointment of Baresi (centre) was baffling

Baresi humiliated by Fulham fiasco

ADDIO BARESI, then. Franco, such a heroic figure in the central defence of Italy and Milan, lasted only a few weeks at Fulham, variously as technical director, then, his contract abbreviated, as advisor to chairman Mohamed Al-Fayed. Why he was appointed at all, why he should even have accepted, remains baffling, and has led to a sad humiliation of a great footballer.

The word is that the notion was that of a nephew of Al-Fayed. If so, it was a poor one. Baresi arrived with no English, no managerial experience, but as an evident rival to the incumbent manager Jean Tigana. Fulham's first two home games in the InterToto Cup against minimal opposition were paralysingly dull. But since then, the penny has dropped, Junichi Inamoto has arrived to give the team impressive firepower, and Tigana reigns, smilingly, supreme.

October 1974

FRANCISCO MARINHO and Paulo Cesar, members of the Brazilian squad at the 1974 World Cup finals in West Germany, were the cover stars 28 years ago.

Yet, strangely, neither was featured inside the October 1974 edition. Instead, an interview with Carlos Alberto, Brazil's victorious captain four years previously, provided one of several talking points.

Carlos Alberto had been left out of the 1974 World Cup squad for "disciplinary reasons", ironically in favour of Marinho, who excelled in Germany despite the Brazilians' failure to reproduce their form from Mexico. Alberto admitted: "You've got to be taught a lesson on occasions, otherwise you can find yourself thinking you're bigger than the sport itself.

"There have been instances in my career when maybe I looked lackadaisical. I know now that if I am to regain my international place, I've got to learn more self-discipline."

Another World Cup-winning captain, West Germany's Franz Beckenbauer, used a column to hit out at his critics. Angry at suggestions that he did not do enough work for his side, Beckenbauer insisted: "I accept on occasions I look as if I am strolling through a game, but that's my style and I don't intend altering it at this late stage in my career.

"My 'strolling' approach enables me to catch the opposing defence unawares. They see me walking with the ball, I see an opening in their defence, which gives me a heaven-sent chance to attack on my own and play a quick one-two with Gerd Muller."

But Beckenbauer conceded that the 1974 World Cup-winning side was not as good as the West German team that had won the European Championship two years earlier. "That was a far superior outfit in all departments...in many ways our football has stagnated since 1972."

Elsewhere in Germany, the transfer of Paul Breitner from Bayern Munich to Real Madrid was making waves. Breitner, then 22 and a member of the World Cup side, had been all set to quit the game to devote himself to charitable work. But the offer from Madrid, including a wage far greater than the £50,000 he earned annually in Munich, proved too good to turn down.

In England, the start of the new season had been plagued by crowd violence. The unpleasant scenes, notably outside Cardiff's ground after the visit of Manchester United, prompted Brian Glanville to consult Peter Terson, author of the musical play *Zigger Zagger*, which tackled the issue of football hooliganism. "It's not the excitement of the match which leads to violence," said Terson. "It's a planned campaign from the word go."

One Cardiff fan showed a novel way to beat the hooligans – by wearing a wartime air-raid helmet.

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